DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 153 755 RC 010 445

AUTHOR Deaton, Brady J., Ed.; McManus, B. R., Ed.
TITLE The Agrarian Tradition in American Society: A Focus on the People and the Land in an Era of Changing Values. A Bicentennial Forum (Knoxville, Tennessee, June 16-18, 1976).
INSTITUTION Tennessee Univ., Knoxville.
PUB DATE 16 Jun 76
NOTE 140p.; The Forum was designated an official Bicentennial Event by the University of Tennessee; funding sources included the University of Tennessee National Alumni Association, University of Tennessee College of Agriculture, and the Tennessee Committee for the Humanities

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$7.35 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Agriculture; *Economic Change; Futures (of Society); *Historical Reviews; Organizations (Groups); Philosophy; Public Schools; *Rural Population; Rural Urban Differences; *Social Change; Values
IDENTIFIERS *Agrarianism; *Traditionalism

ABSTRACT

These proceedings from a bicentennial forum at the University of Tennessee examine the role agrarian tradition has played in shaping U.S. heritage, basic values, and sociopolitical forces; implications of changing values for public policy are also scrutinized. The forum involved humanists and social scientists as speakers and a diverse audience of key state and local decision makers from the public and private sectors (including rural leaders), teachers, newspaper editors, and scholars. An introductory paper pinpoints change from a society of rural landholders to one with primarily an urban-industrial base and lists specific forum concerns about whether values derived from agrarian tradition are applicable to public policy formation in an urban age. Eight papers discuss: "Agrarian Tradition: Historical Perspective and Emerging Challenge"; "Interaction of Rural and Urban Values as Viewed by the Journalist"; "Jeffersonian Thought in an Urban Society"; "Agrarian Tradition and American Agriculture in International Perspective"; "Changing Rural Values--Focus on Local Government"; "Agrarian Tradition and the Political Economy of Resource Use"; "American Public Schools and the Agrarian Myth"; "Agrarianism and Farm Organizations in the United States". The appendix includes major characteristics of successful farm organizations and a brief history of farm movements. (BS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED153755

THE AGRARIAN TRADITION IN AMERICAN SOCIETY:

A FOCUS ON THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND IN AN ERA OF CHANGING VALUES

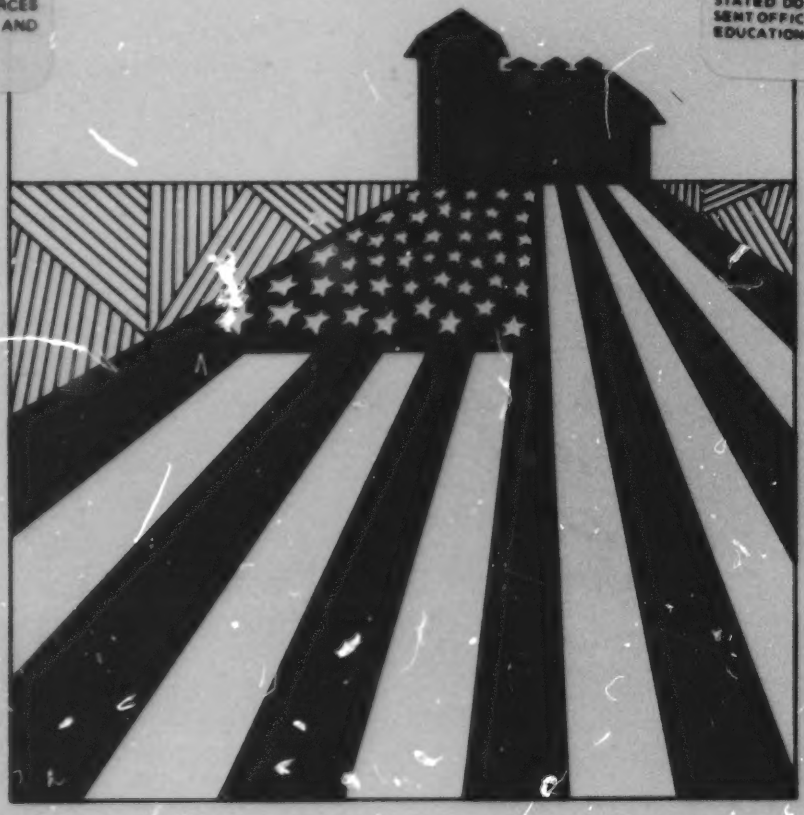
"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Bicentennial Inst. of Agriculture, Tenn. Univ.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.



A BICENTENNIAL FORUM
THE INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE
JUNE 16-18, 1976

RC010445

MAY 1976
ERIC/CRESS
RECEIVED

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Organizing and Planning Committee	iii
Authors	iv
Program	vii
Acknowledgements	x
Introduction, "A Bicentennial Forum," Brady J. Deaton and B. R. McManus, Editors	1
"The Agrarian Tradition: Historical Perspective and Emerging Challenge," by Joe A. Martin	8
"The Interaction of Rural and Urban Values as Viewed by the Journalist," by John Seigenthaler	24
"Jeffersonian Thought in an Urban Society," by Bruce Wheeler	36
"The Agrarian Tradition and American Agriculture in International Perspective," by Harold F. Breimyer	50
"Changing Rural Values - Focus on Local Government," by Walter N. Lambert	64
"The Agrarian Tradition and the Political Economy of Resource Use," by Frank E. Smith	71
"American Public Schools and the Agrarian Myth," by Clinton B. Allison	83
"Agrarianism and Farm Organizations in the United States," by Frank O. Leuthold	[illegible]

ORGANIZING AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Chairman of Committee -

Dr. Brady J. Deaton, Associate Professor
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Committee Members -

Dr. David W. Brown, International Professor
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Ms. Marie Cirillo, Community Development Leader
Department of Rural Development
Nashville Diocese, Clairfield, Tennessee

Dr. John R. Finger, Associate Professor
Department of History
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Dr. Frank O. Leuthold, Professor
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Dr. Joe A. Martin, Head and Professor
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Dr. B. R. McManus, Associate Professor
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Dr. William Bruce Wheeler, Associate Professor
Department of History
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

AUTHORS

Clinton B. Allison, Professor, Department of Education, University of Tennessee, received his B.S. at University of Oklahoma, M.Ed. at Wichita State University, and Ph.D. at University of Oklahoma. Dr. Allison has taught at Wichita High School Southeast, Wichita State University, University of Oklahoma and University of Tennessee. He has been an active participant in University affairs and has served as President of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Allison has held membership and office positions in several historical and educational societies. His writings are included in numerous professional journals.

Harold F. Breimyer is Perry Foundation Professor of Agricultural Economics, University of Missouri. He attended Ohio State University, the University of California and the American University where he received his Ph.D. in 1960. Prior to joining the University of Missouri in 1966, Dr. Breimyer served 30 years with the U. S. Department of Agriculture as economist for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Marketing Service. He has been a staff economist in the Council of Economic Advisors and visiting professor at the University of Illinois.

Dr. Breimyer has extensive international experience evaluating technical assistance programs and advising governments on agricultural policy. He is the author of several distinguished professional publications including the book, Individual Freedom and the Economic Organization of Agriculture. He served as President of the American Agricultural Economics Association in 1968-69 and was honored in 1973 by being elected a "Fellow" of the Association.

Walter N. Lambert is Special Assistant for Federal Relations to the Executive Vice President of the University of Tennessee. He has served as Director of the Technical Assistance Center in the Institute for Public Service, as Research Associate in the Bureau of Public Administration and Instructor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He is a member of the Faculty of the Tennessee Executive Development Program. He was Director of Highway Safety Programs and Director of the Office of Urban and Federal Affairs in the Tennessee Governor's Office. At the local level, he has served in a number of important capacities and is now a member of the Knoxville Charter Revision Commission and the Greater Knoxville Bicentennial Commission. He is a member of the Government Relations Committee of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education and of the Legislative Network of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. He is currently serving as a Board member of the American Society for Public Administration.

Frank O. Leuthold, Professor of Rural Sociology, has been on the faculty of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology since 1965. He obtained a B.S. in agriculture, an M.S. in rural sociology from the Ohio State University and Ph.D. in rural sociology from the University of Wisconsin. His research interests have been on farmer organizations, acceptance of technology, and demography. Dr. Leuthold has written several

professional articles on U. S. farmer organizations. He is President of the West Knoxville Homeowners Association, the U.T. Credit Union and the U.T. Faculty Senate.

Joe A. Martin, a native of Georgia, is presently Professor and Head, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, University of Tennessee. His specialized field of research and teaching is land economics and resource development.

Dr. Martin received B.S. and M.S. degrees from Clemson College and his Ph.D. degree from the University of Minnesota in 1955. He joined the staff of the University of Tennessee in 1947. He has been deeply involved in the academic affairs of the University and has published extensively in academic journals in the areas of the changing rural society and natural resource use.

John Seigenthaler, Publisher, The Tennessean, is a graduate of Peabody College, was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard, and a Duke Fellow in Communications Policy. He has received honorary degrees from Drake University and Tusculum College.

Mr. Seigenthaler has served in the Department of Justice as Administrative Assistant to Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and was a member of the U. S. Advisory Commission on Information. He has received numerous awards for outstanding journalism and has served five times as a member of the Pulitzer Prize Jury.

He serves as host of the weekly Educational TV program, "A Word on Words," and has written several books including An Honorable Profession (with Pierre Salinger and Frank Mankiewicz), A Search for Justice, and The Year of the Scandal Called Watergate.

Frank E. Smith most recently served as visiting professor of public affairs at Sangamon State University and as Associate Director of the Illinois State Board of Higher Education. He is a former Director of the Tennessee Valley Authority and a U. S. congressman from his native Mississippi (1951-62). He has been a delegate to the NATO Parliamentary Conference and to the International Roads Federation Conferences.

He has served as Director of a number of significant national organizations including the Southern Regional Council and the L. Q. C. Lamar Society of which he is a founding member.

Mr. Smith is a well known speaker and writer. Among his significant works are such books as Congressman from Mississippi, Look Away from Dixie, and Politics of Conservation.

William Bruce Wheeler, Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Tennessee, received his B.A. at Duke University, M.A. at the University of North Carolina, and Ph.D. at the University of Virginia in 1967. Dr. Wheeler has previously taught at Lynchburg College, Ohio University, Northern Illinois University, and the University of Virginia.

He was awarded a Thomas Jefferson Fellowship by the University of Virginia and the Beta Sigma Phi Outstanding Teacher Award at University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He has published articles in a number of scholarly journals and has submitted for publication a book on the urban Jeffersonians.

PROGRAM

Wednesday, June 16, 1976

12:30-1:00 p.m.	Registration
1:00-1:15	Opening Remarks and Welcome Dr. O. Glen Hall, Dean College of Agriculture University of Tennessee, Knoxville
1:15-1:45	"The Agrarian Tradition - Historical Perspective and Emerging Challenge" Dr. Joe A. Martin, Head Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology University of Tennessee, Knoxville
1:45-2:15	Response and Audience Participation Led by Dr. John R. Finger, Associate Professor Department of History University of Tennessee, Knoxville
2:15-2:45	"The Interaction of Rural and Urban Values as Viewed by the Journalist" Mr. John Seigenthaler, Publisher The Nashville Tennessean Nashville, Tennessee
2:45-3:15	Response and Audience Participation Led by Dr. Ronnie Day, Professor Department of History East Tennessee State University Johnson City, Tennessee
3:15-3:30	Break
3:30-4:00	"Jeffersonian Thought in an Urban Society" Dr. Bruce Wheeler, Associate Professor Department of History University of Tennessee, Knoxville
4:00-4:30	Response and Audience Participation Led by Dr. Joseph D. Coffey, Professor and Head Department of Agricultural Economics Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Blacksburg, Virginia
4:45-5:45	Reception - UT Faculty Club

Thursday, June 17, 1976

8:30-9:00 a.m.	"The Agrarian Tradition and American Agriculture in International Perspective" Dr. Harold Breimyer Department of Agricultural Economics University of Missouri Columbia, Missouri
9:00-9:30	Response and Audience Participation Led by Dr. David E. Lingo, Associate Professor Department of Religious Studies University of Tennessee, Knoxville
9:30-10:00	"Changing Rural Values - Focus on Local Government" Mr. Walter Lambert Assistant to the Vice-President University of Tennessee, Knoxville
10:00-10:30	Response and Audience Participation Led by Dr. Robert Orr, Assistant Professor Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology University of Tennessee, Knoxville
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-11:15	"The Agrarian Tradition and the Political Economy of Resource Use" Mr. Frank E. Smith Illinois Higher Education Commission Writer, former congressman, and former Director of Tennessee Valley Authority Jackson, Mississippi
11:15-11:45	Response and Audience Participation Led by Dr. Michael Lofaro, Assistant Professor Department of English University of Tennessee, Knoxville
11:45-1:30 p.m.	Lunch Break
1:30-3:00	Separate discussion groups organized around four themes developed from the preceding topics. Specific questions will be formulated to provide initial direction. A resource person will be designated to appraise discussion and use it for basis of informal presentation on morning of June 18.
3:00	Informal interaction, activities of personal choice

Friday, June 18, 1976

8:30-9:00 a.m. "Agrarianism and Farm Organizations in the United States"

Dr. Frank O. Leuthold, Professor
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

9:00-9:30 Response and Audience Participation Led by

Mr. K. C. Dotson
Director of Research and Legislation
Farm Bureau
Columbia, Tennessee

9:30-9:45 Break

9:45-11:30 Informal reaction panel included designated resource people from each of the preceding afternoon discussion groups. The panel was composed of:

- Dr. Roy Morris
  Assistant County School Superintendent
  Tazewell, Tennessee
- Mr. Tommy Burks, Chairman
  House Agriculture Committee, Tennessee Legislature
- Mr. Frank Weirick, Sunday Editor
  Knoxville News-Sentinel
- Dr. Clint Allison, Associate Professor
  Department of Curriculum and Instruction
  College of Education
  University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Each person used 5-15 minutes for discussion and audience involvement.

11:30-12:00 A Report on Audience Reaction and Changing Views Resulting from Participation in the Forum

Dr. Charles L. Cleland, Professor
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

12:00-2:00 p.m. Luncheon and Address

"The Conservation Ethic - Rural Values in a Changing Society"

Ms. Wilma Dykeman
Author, journalist
Newport, Tennessee

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Forum on the Agrarian Tradition was made possible by a combination of funding from the Tennessee Committee for the Humanities, University of Tennessee National Alumni Association, and University of Tennessee College of Agriculture. The organizing committee expresses appreciation to these groups for funding and support. The Forum was designated an official Bicentennial Event by the University of Tennessee.

O. Glen Hall, Dean of the College of Agriculture, and Joe A. Martin, Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, were especially supportive in planning and implementing the Forum. Various faculty members of the Departments of History, English, and Philosophy contributed to the work of the committee and participated in the program. Assistance in publicizing the Forum was given by G. W. F. Cavender, Conrad Rainhardt, George Mays, and the staff of the Department of Communications, Institute of Agriculture.

Staff members in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology gave substantial assistance to the program. We want to express appreciation and call attention to the work of Jo Ella Washburn, artist in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, who designed the covers for this publication as well as for the program. Jeanne Sharpe and Robert Orrick also deserve special thanks for their "extra efforts." Typists in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology labored through several drafts of program materials and in many other ways facilitated the work of the organizing committee. A special thanks is extended to Melitta Stoutt for typing the final copy of this publication.

We express our gratitude to each speaker, discussion leader, and panelist for sharing their ideas with Forum participants. The quality of their contributions can be judged, in part, by the papers presented in this collection.

THE AGRARIAN TRADITION IN AMERICAN SOCIETY: A FOCUS ON THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND IN AN ERA OF CHANGING VALUES

*** A Bicentennial Forum ***

Brady J. Deaton and B. R. McKinnon, Editors[1]

The Forum was designed to examine the role of the agrarian tradition in shaping our heritage, basic values, and the sociopolitical forces of our nation. Aspects of historical and contemporary thought provided a public policy perspective on specific issues such as resource conservation, local government, agricultural policy, and public education.

The Bicentennial suggests a re-examination of our heritage and the basic values and social forces that have shaped our history. Social and economic policy can be formulated with increased clarity if underlying values are made explicit and their consequences placed under scrutiny.

A major force shaping American values has been the "agrarian tradition" which has influenced the development of the land-grant college system and modified national agricultural policy. The agrarian tradition is based principally on the philosophy of John Locke and was forcefully postulated in this country by Thomas Jefferson. Consideration of these philosophical underpinnings of public policy was the key focus of the Forum. Speakers were asked to approach their topics from a value perspective. Hence, the Forum was designed to accomplish the following:

1. To examine the significance of the agrarian tradition in the formulation of public policy in the United States.

---

[1]Associate Professors, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, Institute of Agriculture, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee.

2. To involve social scientists, historians, journalists, writers and educators in a dialogue with a target audience of state and local community leaders, journalists, and educators to gauge changing values in society and their implications for public policy.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of this dialogue in stimulating a re-examination of societal values and public policy among participants at the Forum; i.e., speakers and audience.

Theme

The focus on the agrarian tradition further developed the state theme of the Tennessee Committee for the Humanities: "We the People—Our Land, Our Government, Our Heritage." The agrarian tradition involves a set of values associated with people's relationship to the land. The principles of soil conservation and land husbandry are strongly embedded in this tradition. At the same time, a society of family farmers based on small land units was set out as an ideal social system that drew on a person's relationship with the land and established a socially responsible citizen of an emerging democracy. A federated system of local, state, and national government was viewed as responsive to citizen expression in the course of serving public needs.

Over the past 200 years the United States has evolved from a society of rural landholders to one with primarily an urban-industrial base. We now have a highly mobile, urban population in which only 4 percent of the people still live on farms, while perhaps another 20 percent live in rural nonfarm areas. Agriculture has become highly capital intensive and interrelated with a vast world market. It has also become highly interdependent with the purchased input and product processing sectors.

Increasingly, the federal government has accepted the responsibilities for social service delivery which were once the domain of the private sector or of local government. In recent years, concern over a growing federal superstructure has reawakened interest in the potential for stronger local government and more private mechanisms for delivery of social services. The revenue sharing policy is one important manifestation of this movement. In view of these changes, a re-examination of our agrarian tradition seemed appropriate and, indeed, essential. Our heritage, values, and institutions have faced increasingly critical appraisal, while consideration of their fundamental roles in shaping society has been neglected.

An inquiry into the nature of our changing society and its value orientations was proposed as a first step in a reappraisal of social, political, and economic changes in the United States. A blend of scholars from the humanities and the social sciences served as feature speakers, discussion leaders, and panelists for the Forum. This combination of disciplines was necessary to explore these issues with sufficient historical and philosophical depth.

Humanistic Questions about Public Policy Issues

An in depth inquiry into the values of society and their interrelationship with the agrarian tradition was a major emphasis of the organizing committee. A stimulating process of objective assessment and personal introspection was sought as one result of the Forum. Specific public policy issues and related humanistic questions included the following:

1. Are societal values derived from the agrarian tradition applicable to public policy formation in an urban age?

2. Can rural America be considered a major proponent of resource conservation?
3. Is the functioning of modern agriculture in a highly interrelated world consistent with the long-run well-being of the American people?
4. Should there be a conscious public policy for making rural America a relatively more attractive living environment?
5. Should public policy foster a climate favorable to small farm operations even if resulting economic inefficiency causes higher food prices?
6. To what extent should private land-use incentives be publicly modified to promote a higher quality of life?
7. How can conflicts in values concerning rural resource use among increasingly diverse interest groups be resolved?
8. To what extent can communications about basic values be enhanced in view of diverse special interests, inherent biases and mistrust?

Audience

This Forum was directed at an audience consisting of key state and local, public and private sector decision makers, high school teachers, newspaper editors, and professional scholars. The event was broadly publicized through newspapers, radio, and television coverage.

In addition, specific mailings were sent to school teachers, state legislators, county extension agents, and rural leaders. Personal contacts of the organizing committee were employed in order to attract a diverse audience. This publication represents a continuation of our efforts to communicate the

general theme and specific ideas developed during the Forum. The papers are arranged in their original order of presentation with limited revisions.

The Host Institution

The University of Tennessee was originally known as Blount College, which was granted its charter in 1794 by the Legislature of the Federal Territory. In those days, before statehood was achieved, the campus was located near the present-day business district of Knoxville.

Not only is the University one of the older institutions of higher education in the nation, but also it is one of the few with a nonsectarian heritage. Blount College was also unique in that it was the first college to admit women, though this policy was later reversed to restrict enrollment to men. It reverted back to allow coeducation in 1892.

In 1807 the State Legislature changed the institution's name from Blount College to East Tennessee College, making it the recipient of half of the proceeds of the sale of land set aside by Congress for the support of two colleges. One was to be in East Tennessee and the other in Middle Tennessee. With the aid of these proceeds, East Tennessee College was able to acquire "The Hill," a 40-acre tract of land, in 1826, beginning the location of the University at its present site.

The State Legislature again changed the institution's name in 1840 to East Tennessee University. During the Civil War the University was forced to close its doors while the University buildings were used as a hospital. East Tennessee University opened again after the war, beginning its most productive and successful years from that time until the present.

Under the Morrill Act of 1862, the State Legislature in 1869 selected East Tennessee University as Tennessee's federal land-grant institution. This change resulted in the establishment of an Agricultural and Mechanical College as part of the University to be supported by an endowment from the sale of land warrants received by Tennessee from the federal government. The attempts of the University to broaden its curricula to that of a true university were given great impetus with these additions.

In 1879 East Tennessee became the University of Tennessee as a result of the State Legislature's naming it the State University. The charge to the University was, therefore, to serve the entire state as the head of the public education system. The future and reputation of the state and the University became inextricably bound together.

At the present time, the University boasts 23 different colleges and schools with its location and services extending over the entire state. In 1968 the institution was reorganized by the Board of Trustees, giving a central administrative staff responsibility for the entire statewide functions of the University and establishing chancellors on the primary campuses.

The University's Agricultural College has expanded its service throughout the state over the years. Originally, the state established The Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station in 1882, making it one of the first five in the United States. Then, when agricultural research became a national concern in 1887 with the Hatch Act, support was made available for agricultural experiment stations in each state. As the Experiment Station system developed, field experiments were established throughout the state in cooperation with individual farmers. The value of these outlying cooperative experiments was widely appreciated and efforts were made by groups of farmers to establish permanent research centers in several areas of the state.

Today the University program serves the state through agricultural experiment stations at nine locations and through agricultural extension leaders and agents in each of the 95 counties.

The University agricultural program has worked in cooperation with the Tennessee Valley Authority since its establishment in the late 1930's and 1940's. These joint efforts have achieved prodigious gains in many areas of research and service to Tennessee residents. Relations between the University and TVA were, and remain, cordial and cooperative.

As the history of the institution reveals, the University has developed through its responsiveness to the needs of Tennessee residents in a changing national context. The University continues to develop in a spirit of reciprocity with its environment. Whenever the University engages in research or cooperative efforts with institutions such as the Oak Ridge National Laboratory or TVA, the University benefits as do the residents of Tennessee and other states. In a very real sense, UT is still somewhat like Blount College in the days before state boundaries were established, since research and service are the benefits to society which transcend state boundaries and which work toward an improved quality of life for all. This sense of historical mission and devotion to the public interest inspired our Forum on the agrarian tradition.

THE AGRARIAN TRADITION

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND EMERGING CHALLENGE

Joe A. Martin*

The bicentennial is a very important landmark in our history. A visitor to our country who knows us very well might say that we should celebrate the occasion if we know how to celebrate. Americans, however, are not good at celebrations; we never have been. We simply observe our holidays without very much celebration. To observe a holiday in our tradition means that we merely refrain from business and work. Yet, the essence of celebration is an emotional experience. To celebrate is to vicariously relive the joy and happiness of mountain top experiences of our history.

There are, I suppose, two basic reasons why we are not good at celebration. First, Americans are by nature more concerned with the future and the promise it holds than we are about the past and what has been achieved or lost. Second, Americans place great store on being unemotional. We pretend to be rational and deliberate in all our behavior. We are programmed from infancy to suppress emotions and cultivate reasoned judgment. The work ethic dominates our lives, even our play and recreation. Emotional behavior, like all behavior, must be learned and nourished to be useful and satisfying. This explains why Latins excel as lovers and enjoying life while Americans excel in per capita GNP and football.

If it is true that we are not as skilled at celebration as some other peoples of the world, we should not be discouraged. After all, we are very

---

*Professor and Head, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

young. Two hundred years is a relatively short span in human history. If celebration is a desirable quality in human culture, then we too can add this richness to the American culture as we grow older.

It is proper that we observe our Bicentennial by a re-examination of our heritage and especially the basic values that have shaped our history and created the present state of affairs. We are concerned about human values because we affirm that our collective values lie at the very foundation of what we are. Human values predetermine human behavior. Collective human behavior is the stuff out of which history is made within the framework of space and time. Our history as a nation covers a time span of two centuries filled with events large and small, of movements and trends, of war and peace, of prosperity and depression, of struggle between classes, interest groups, religious groups, and races. After 200 years we have not arrived. It is true, I believe, that we live in a better world than our fathers and grandfathers. But things are not perfect. For too many of our citizens the American dream is not a reality.

The Legacy of Jefferson

The American Revolution was not just an event. The year 1776 and the War of Independence which followed was the beginning of a process which took on a life of its own. For 200 years there has been that creative tension between what is and what ought to be. There were periods when America seemed to be satisfied with the status quo. These were perhaps breathing spells. There has always been that "enemy within" which stood in the way of perfection of the American dream. It has been an eternal struggle to right the wrong, to adjust and correct the system. This is the essence of self-government. To the outsider and those who do not understand the dynamics of a democratic

society, our system may appear to be slow, chaotic, and messy. But in spite of what may be apparent, thanks to Mr. Jefferson, our system has worked very well for us for 200 years.

There were no doubt a large number of great and brave men, known and unknown to us today, who forged the Revolution and to whom we pay honor in this Bicentennial year. Among all who took a part in the founding of the Republic, Thomas Jefferson stands as a singular figure that gave an enduring life to the Revolution. His was the contribution that is so vital and alive even today, not only here, but wherever people cherish or seek individual freedom and self-determination.

I must confess that I feel like an intellectual pygmy when I confront the reasoning of this man on some subjects. The sheer brilliance of his intellect intimidates me. I share the feelings of the late John F. Kennedy when he is reported to have said to a large group of intellectuals that he had brought to the White House: "There is perhaps assembled in this room today the greatest amount of intellectual ability that has been in this room since Thomas Jefferson sat here alone." Jefferson's wisdom and his perception of the nature of man, combined with his skills as a statesman, enabled him to mold and shape the polity of the Republic. I regard this as the greatest contribution to human freedom that either chance or Divine Providence has laid upon this nation. Aside from the fact that Jefferson held four key positions during the formative years of the Republic--Ambassador to France, Secretary of State, Vice President, and President--he had more influence on shaping U. S. economic and social institutions than one can scarcely imagine. Consider the fact that his persuasive powers and leadership are credited with: the abolition of the ancient practice of primogeniture and entail of landed property, the separation

of church and state, freedom of religion, free public education and widespread ownership of land. This list does not encompass all the noble causes he championed. Perhaps the greatest of Jefferson's contributions to America was an attitude of mind and a faith in the potential of the so-called "common man." His philosophy and attitude of mind were grounded in beliefs and values about what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong. To Jefferson the ultimate good and the final arbiter of what is right is found in the natural law as established by nature's God. If these 18th century ideas sound strange to us today, we should remember that it was the translation of these ideas into action two centuries ago that provided our rich inheritance of freedom.

It is appropriate at this particular time in our history that we go back and re-examine the basic values and principles which were placed in the foundation of our system. It is appropriate that we review these things because recent events in our country (and here I refer to Watergate and all that term implies) have, I believe, demonstrated anew one of the basic presuppositions laid down by Jefferson when he said that even under the best form of government those entrusted with power will, in time and by slow operations, pervert it into tyranny.

Unlike most great thinkers and intellectuals, Jefferson gave us no tightly reasoned, cut-and-dried doctrine of government. His contribution may be best described as one of creative eclecticism. He was first and foremost a very practical man. According to his own words, he had no use for metaphysics. He held no doctrinaire view that a republican form of government with its checks and balances would prove to be a panacea. With regard to this point he observed that no form of government but the best form, plus eternal vigilance, is the price of liberty.

At the core of Jefferson's political creed was a deep and abiding concern for human freedom and a profound faith in the capacity of people to know the difference between right and wrong. He proclaimed the happy truth that people are capable of self-government. He qualified this by adding that to govern themselves well a people must be enlightened or educated. Thus he believed that the education of citizens was a public responsibility. He sponsored a bill in the Virginia Legislature to levy a tax to support elementary public education. The bill was enacted in 1796, but those opposed to his "socialistic" schools forced an amendment to give each county the option as to whether it would levy a school tax. Moreover, Jefferson is credited with having a strong hand in designing the public education system of France while serving as ambassador in Paris.[1] It is ironic that the French were more receptive to his proposals on public education than his fellow citizens in the State of Virginia. The French system was set up in the last decade of the 18th century. It was almost a century later before the State of Virginia finally got around to providing funds to carry out Jefferson's educational program. To him popular education was the only defense against the tyranny of those in positions of power and the corruption of democratic government.

Jefferson placed the individual at the center of his thinking. To the individual he would assign an equal measure of freedom and responsibility. To the government--executive, legislative, and judicial--he would assign only those powers necessary for the maintenance of public harmony and a secure balance between individual freedom and responsibility. His famous phrase--the Government that governs least governs best--reflected his innate distrust of instituted authority.

---

[1] Beloff, Max, Thomas Jefferson and American Democracy, Collier Books, New York, 1948, p. 73.

We would all agree that Jefferson's little government would not and could not fulfill what we feel to be our needs from government in this age. Nevertheless, there remain in America today many people, perhaps a majority, who share the Jeffersonian view that trust in government officials, elected or appointed, should not be carried too far. Lord Acton phrased the warning more succinctly than Jefferson when he said, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." As we have all observed, our own times are not without verification of this truth.

The Agrarian Ethic

Agrarianism is as old as civilization itself. It is an ideology or a system of ideas, beliefs, and values about the fundamental nature of agriculture as an industry and as a way of life. The Bible, for example, was written in a metaphor that is distinctly agrarian. While agrarianism as an ideology is secular, it has attached to it a definite moral and religious leaning. Farming, as the backbone of society, was raised to the level of a sacred calling. According to Jefferson, farm people are "the chosen people of God."

In the agrarian view virtue and goodness of the cultivator and husbandman are derived from his close association with nature. The farmer must be good because he is a partner with nature, and nature is good. According to agrarian ideology, to separate man from his proper relationship with nature leads without exception to the corruption of morals and the breakdown of society. It was Jefferson's opinion that the best barometer of a healthy society is shown by the proportion of citizens engaged in agriculture. His contempt for the city was reflected when he wrote, "The mobs of great cities

add just so much to the support of pure government as sores do to the strength of the human body.[2]

Although later in life Jefferson revised his opinion about the benefits of commerce and nonagricultural industries, his articulation of the agrarian ideology took hold of the American mind as no other idea has. Not only has the agrarian ideology provided the logic and rationale for American agricultural policy, the agrarian tradition jumped the farm fence and spread to every nook and cranny of American thought. This influence can be picked up at many points in our culture. For example, candidates for high public office have always thought it to be to their advantage to claim a humble farm origin. We have a special category of Presidents called "Log Cabin Presidents." Harry Truman was a straight and honest man. We knew that because we were told he could plow a straighter furrow than any boy around back on the farm in Missouri. Jimmy Carter takes pride in telling us of his humble upbringing as a peanut farmer from Plains, Georgia.

The American city with its style of life is like no other city in the world. The suburban home with an expanse of green lawn and garden is an attempt to bring country living into an urban environment. We place such a high value upon being able to commune with nature that we are willing to live in a smaller and less expensive house in order to have a large expanse of well kept nature around us. This is not the only cost of our nature worship. It has contributed to the sprawl of our cities. Associated with the sprawl is a higher cost for all kinds of public services, especially transportation.

---

[2]Baloff, op. cit., p. 82.

Our efforts to bring the country to town with us, plus our insistence on using private means of transportation, has resulted in taking up an inordinate amount of valuable space in cities to accomodate the fuming, noisy machine that we love so much--the automobile. Viewed in its broadest sense our persistent bias toward agrarian ideology has resulted, I suspect, in our failure as a nation to develop an effective and balanced policy, one that would have recognized, at least 50 years ago, that we were becoming an urban-industrial society.

The Conflicts of Urbanization

A part of the agrarian tradition is lifestyle. The lifestyle in rural areas and in the city have historically presented a contrast. That contrast has been the source of tension and friction. Out of that friction has emerged a mind-set and pattern of thought reflecting a lack of sympathy and understanding on both sides of the other's problems and way of life. The countryman with his homespun clothes, uncouth manners, and odd dialect was made the butt of ridicule by the city dweller. The countryman was called a hayseed, clodhopper, rube, country bumpkin, hick, or hillbilly. He was a crude son of the soil. His task was simple--to sow and reap and tend the flock and herd. To do these things, it was thought, required only brawn, not brains. The classic attitude was put in verse by the poet Edwin Markham after first seeing Millet's famous painting "The Man with the Hoe":

> Bowed by the weight of centures he leans
> Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
> The emptiness of ages in his face,
> And on his back the burden of the world...
>
> Stolid and stunned a brother to the ox...
> Whose breath blew out the light within that brain.

Here we see a mixture of pity and contempt for the man whose lot it was, either by choice or by chance, to do the hard, dirty work required so that he and his fellowman might eat and be clothed. To add insult to injury, the countryman was frequently accused of giving less than a full measure, selling adulterated products, and placing the best fruit on the top of the basket.

On the other side of this conflict the countryman looked upon the city dweller with something less than charity. To the farmer, the city fellow was a sharpie, a dude, a slicker, an idler, a parasite upon those who engaged in honest toil. The man in town was accused of trickery, gouging, and price fixing. To the farmer the middleman was regarded as unproductive. The merchant or trader, it was held, added nothing to the products he handled except a margin of profit; and, furthermore, one had best keep his hand on his pocketbook when talking to the clever rascal.

So went the distorted expressions of ridicule and distrust between the farmer and the townsman. As petty as these views and attitudes may appear to us today they have been of no small importance in our history. In recent years the sharp differences between lifestyle on the farm and in the city have been narrowed greatly. The forces of universal education, mass media, the commercialization of agriculture, and the dispersion of manufacturing industry out into the countryside have all had an homogenizing effect upon our culture.

The Land Ethic

An important element of our heritage and a part of the agrarian tradition has been the widespread ownership of land. It was the promise of land-ownership that drew people from Europe to this country. The availability of land for the taking on the frontier served as an equalizer of opportunity and

as a guarantor of a certain kind of freedom. It remains true today that the ownership of land, even a small city lot, brings to its owner a bundle of rights and a vested interest which our political system recognizes and respects as it does no other form of property which an individual may hold. Here I have referenced to the legal implications of a fee-simple title to land. Whether or not we have ever thought about it, the extent of the owner's rights in land in this country is very unique in the modern world. It is the nearest thing on this planet to absolute sovereignty over a piece of real estate.

This has become an issue of increasing concern in recent months. Many people are contending that we should exercise more control over land use, especially in and around urban areas. Several bills have been introduced in Congress and in our State Legislature to establish land-use planning. Some states have enacted legislation in this field. At the federal level the debate continues. The issue has been joined over public vs. private rights in land. Our traditional ideas about the owner's rights in land are in conflict with the larger public interests. Deep down we know that private property does not give us a license to do as we please, yet we are reluctant to yield to the demand for change. Private property is a social contract, and like all contracts must be renegotiated as conditions change.

The institution of private property in land as we know it in this country was shaped to a great extent by Thomas Jefferson. As noted earlier, he was primarily responsible for the abolition of the ancient practices of primogeniture and entail of land which tended to create a landed aristocracy. Jefferson also had a leadership role in framing the early land ordinances which established the policy for the creation of new states on the frontier and distribution of public lands to settlers. The policy objective was to establish

family-sized farms owned by the operator. In Jefferson's words the small landholder is the most precious part of the state.

During the early years, land was sold at a very low price. When even a low price seemed to be a barrier to ownership by the cultivator, sale of land on credit was instituted. This too failed to satisfy the goal; so in 1862, following the passage of the Homestead Act, land was given outright to settlers. Some 1.3 million settlers claimed about 214 million acres of land under the Homestead Act between 1862 and 1923. By 1923 most of the land in the public domain that could be used for agricultural production had been claimed. In spite of the policy of free land, the 1880 Census on farm tenancy revealed, to the chagrin of agrarians, that 25% of the farmers were renters. Farm tenancy increased in every decade from 1880 to 1930 when 42% of the 6.25 million farmers in the U. S. were tenants.

Why and how should the policy of owner-operationship fail so badly when we had just gotten through giving away about all the agricultural land we had? Time does not permit a detailed citation of the conventional wisdom on this question. The biggest reason, perhaps, was the fact that we had a protracted depression in agriculture for about 60 years, except for a brief period from about 1910 to 1921. What concerns us most here is the fact that the agrarians did not give up on their goal of ownership of land by farmers. And they have not given up even today. President Roosevelt, by executive order, declared the Homestead Act inoperative in the lower 48 states in 1932. The Homestead Law remains in force in the State of Alaska. However, we have not been very successful in moving would-be farmers to the public domain in Alaska. What we have done instead is to encourage the purchase of land by farmers through the extension of long-term credit. There has been established since 1914 a number of institutions to channel land purchase credit to farmers. Some of these

agencies have had, and do have today, government subsidy in the form of administrative costs and below-market rates of interest on loans. These would include the old Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Purchase program and the present Farmers Home Administration. The oldest and largest agency, the Federal Land Bank, which dates back to 1914, receives no federal subsidy.

In every decade since 1930 farm tenancy has declined. In 1969, the latest census count available, only 13% of the U. S. farmers were classified as full tenants. To put it another way, 87% of all farmers own at least part of the land they operate. This is the lowest percentage of tenancy since 1880 when farm tenure data were first collected. This seems to indicate that one of the most important land policy goals, as set forth at the founding of the Republic, has been fairly well achieved.

It is ironic that having finally achieved the goal, one frequently hears farmers themselves raising questions about the advantages of owning land. This suggests that the old agrarian ideology about landownership may have outlived its usefulness. The ownership of agricultural land today does not carry with it the economic or the social significance that it did in 1800 or even as late as 1940. There are two reasons why land and the ownership of land has declined in its importance. First, the technological revolution in agriculture brought with it the need for large blocks of other forms of capital. And the economic contributions of the nonland capital on a farm may be as high as or higher than that of land itself. The second reason is that our legal system, and society in general, does not discriminate against tenancy as was once the case. In short, a rental contract has become a respectable and accepted way of doing business in agriculture just as a contract is viewed in other forms of business.

Agriculture in Modern Society

The pattern that one sees emerging in commercial agriculture today, especially in the South, and to some extent in the Midwest, is what geographers have described as a fragmented Neo-Plantations system.[3] The principle resource ingredient of this system is managerial skill. Combined with the managerial skill of the farmer is operating capital in the form of high technology equipment, chemicals, and rented land. The operating capital may be owned or borrowed. The land base on which this system is being built is the dead remains of the old small family farm system. The small family farm emerged in the 19th century and was based on the horse-drawn plow. This modern form of the plantation is usually not a contiguous tract of land, but is commonly made up of numerous tracts scattered over the community.

The operator frequently owns only the headquarters unit, which may be the old family farm. In many instances, the headquarters unit itself is rented. The total size of the unit varies with the type of agriculture. The economies of size is dependent upon the scale of technology used. Units of 500 to 1,000 acres of cropland are not uncommon. The operating capital invested in the business may run from $200,000 to $500,000. The farmer's equity in the business is usually very thin in the beginning. The operator has a line of credit down at his bank or local PCA. He would feel at ease discussing cash flow, capital gains, or tax write-off with any businessman.

The labor force required on the average unit would involve less labor than was found on the typical "two-horse" farm of a generation ago. The little

---

[3] Akins, Charles S., "The Fragmented Neo-Plantation: A New Type of Farm Operation in the Southeast," Southeastern Geographers, Vol. XI, No. 1971, pp. 43-51.

sharecropper or tenant houses have for the most part disappeared from the landscape. The former occupants have been drawn into the industrial labor force or perhaps on to the welfare roll in large cities.

This neoplantation respresents the new structure of the full-time commercial farmer. It remains primarily a family type of operation; that is, the management and most of the labor is provided by the operator and his family. It is different from the family farm of an earlier time. It must be different if it is to supply our needs for food and fiber while also providing an opportunity for the farm family to earn an income comparable to that in other occupations.

Traditional agrarians wring their hands and cry that we are seeing the last remnant of the good society being destroyed as the small family farm is taken over by the big commercial operator. My answer to this complaint would be as one wag has put it: "The best remedy for the good old days is a clear memory." Several million Americans living in cities today, I am sure, have clear memories about their life on small family farms back in the 1930's and 1940's. They voted with their feet.

The agrarian ideology is schizophrenic in its attitude toward agriculture. The agrarians generally have encouraged agricultural progress through scientific research and education. The system of land-grant universities with their agricultural research, extension, and teaching programs are a part of the agrarian tradition. The primary role of these institutions has been to change agriculture. These institutions provided the technology for the agricultural revolution. The improved technology released labor from food production and made it available for industrial and commercial expansion.

In 1776, perhaps 90% of the population was engaged in agriculture. In 1976, we have only about 4% of the labor force on farms. The productive

efficiency of our agricultural system makes available to us an excellent diet by world standards at a very low cost--roughly 17¢ out of each dollar of the average family income. In addition to supplying our own agricultural needs, we have an export capacity equivalent to roughly 30% of our total production at the present time. This potential is by all measures the largest source of surplus food in a hungry world.

How should our surplus food potential be used? American farmers are anxious to take advantages of the market potential that they see in the world. Should we use this surplus food, as is frequently suggested, as a weapon to extract political tribute from those whose ideologies and values are different from our own? Or should we simply display our merchandize and sell abroad as we do at home without discrimination? My own preference is for the latter policy. I favor this for three very practical reasons: 1) neither dependable friends or allies can be bought, nor can political tribute be extracted indefinitely; 2) people cannot be starved into submission to any ideology, and 3) food is not a fixed resource like oil. Other sources of supply can be developed in the world, and other sources would be developed in relatively short order if we try to play dog-in-the-manger with our surplus food.

The Task Before Us

Agriculture and the city stand as two of the greatest cultural artifacts of civilization. Both have served man well. Throughout history the farm and the city have represented opposite ends of a cultural and economic continuum of human activity. As parts of an economic continuum, one cannot exist without the other. Men and women of perhaps less intellect than Jefferson have learned that neither the farm nor city is necessarily good or bad. We have learned from experience that the good and satisfying life may be created both in the

city and on the farm. Our experience has also clearly demonstrated that life for some of our citizens can be, and is, miserable in both settings. It is the misery of our fellowman that should challenge us both now and in the future. As we attempt to shape the future, we should remember that some notions and values need to change lest we carry so much intellectual baggage of the past that we cannot do what needs to be done.

On this note, let me close with another thought from Thomas Jefferson as he wrote in a letter to Elbridge Gerry of Philadelphia on January 26, 1799. Jefferson delivered himself of the opinion that he was in favor of "encouraging progress in all fields of science and in all branches of learning. We should always look for improvements. It is not well to believe that government, religion, morality, and every other science were in their highest perfection possible in past ages, or to believe that nothing can ever be devised more perfect than what was established by our forefathers."[4]

So you have it; Jefferson was reasoning with and leading the people of his own times. He did not expect or encourage future generations to believe everything he believed. But surely he hoped that each succeeding generation would address the problems of their time with informed judgment and in the spirit of freedom. For Jefferson understood, as we do, that the world with all its problems and opportunities belongs to the living and not to the dead. This is not to suggest that each generation should ignore its intellectual heritage, but rather that it is the task of each generation to refine and build upon its heritage in the light of new facts in a changing world.

---

[4]Dunbauld, Edward, The Political Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Representative Selections, The American Heritage Series, New York, 1955, p. 48.

THE INTERACTION OF RURAL AND URBAN VALUES AS VIEWED BY THE JOURNALIST

by

John Seigenthaler*

The American press is best, I think, when issue lines are clearly drawn, when value concepts are cleanly delineated and when the dynamics of social conflict are apparent and discernible. When the journalist confronts history, it must be viewed, first of all, through its impact on contemporary affairs. When the newsperson performs well, he or she sees the most vital history as that which is made with each day's breaking news. The reporter who gathers facts and writes news about those facts is never comfortable straining to accommodate tradition to his or her work.

It is the nature of what we do as journalists to deal primarily with the "now" of things. We report what is in focus. Often we deal superficially with anything that blurs or is fuzzy. Thus, shifting attitudes and changing moods and subtle movements in the society, or in the world around us, quite often are matters which, as journalists, we avoid or ignore as being "unimportant" or "developing" (that's an excuse quite often for not writing), or not translatable into comprehensible journalese. There is some question among some academics in the field of letters whether comprehensible journalese should in any way be competently related to the English language. But that aside, the press in its zealous commitment to the "now" may miss the hardening substance of news for weeks or months or even years.

I suggest that evidence of this is to be found in looking back to the recent past and considering the media's coverage of the Vietnam story in 1966

---

*Publisher, The Tennessean, Nashville, Tennessee.

(and I would exclude the excellent work of the New York Times from that consideration), or the Watergate story back during the Presidential campaign of 1972 (and here I would exclude the great investigative journalism of the Washington Post). We of the press sometimes find ourselves in an ambient state; we resist the magnetic pull of history and tradition which might at times help us move ahead of the news. It has been said that had American reporters covering Vietnam in the early 1960's looked at the historical experiences of that troubled land--even the then-recent disaster that had confronted the French--it would have been impossible to report hopefully or even with positive expectancy about the outcome of U. S. involvement there.

Frank Mankiewicz, the writer, told me recently that had the American press simply looked honestly at what Mankiewicz would call the "Nixon tradition," that Watergate would not have come as a surprise and that the whole of the American press much earlier could have effectively raised the question about what most of us accepted for too long as a third rate, second-story job.

Which, by indirection, brings me to the subject that finds all of you here, "The Agrarian Tradition," and which brings me as well to the topic which has me here, "The Interaction of Rural and Urban Values as Viewed by the Journalist." Any reporter I know, when confronted these days by the general umbrella topic of your conference, and by the specifics of mine, is most likely to hum a few bars of "The Way We Were" and rush back to the latest press conference of Judith Exner or Elizabeth Ray to discover the way we are. Ideally and usually, the press performs with some relevant adequacy an informational, if not educational, role in society. But it seems to me, as I look at your subject and at my topic, that we who are in the business of reporting on trends and currents and processes within the society are in fact missing a potential

story. Sometimes the press has run the risk of speculating on what forces are at work to shape goals and directions of public and private institutions. Now, it occurs to me, is the time for some of that risk-taking. And I agreed to come today to address this somewhat pedantic topic--copy editors on my staff would call it downright pompous and absolutely impossible to get into a two column headline--but I came because it seemed to me that beneath the surface of hard, fast-developing news there is evolving the making of a news story which may be vital to these times. And it is within the very blur and fuss that is created by the <u>new</u> confrontation of rural and urban values and, more than that, the conflict that evolves from the absence of these values, that we may find what is happening to the soul and spirit, and indeed the body, of our land.

Now I don't propose to this audience to define in any detail the intrinsic advantages and the obvious disadvantages of either way of life--the urban or the rural--or to comment on the vacuous attempt by many in society over the last three decades to establish a sort of "third world" of their own out in surburbia where they gaze from their patios across their green lawns of indifference while sipping instant martinis or ready-made mint juleps. I prefer here to treat instead the effect that the merging of lifestyles has had on most of us in society at large, and to question whether those of us in the press are really up to, or on to, what it means.

As one journalist, and I should say, as one Southern journalist, I perceive a dramatic social and spiritual ferment taking hold in the land growing out of a confrontation between past dreams and present realitites. To me, the agrarian tradition, as much as it found its birth in the original colonies, has become a <u>Southern</u> tradition. It is, I think, a dying tradition. I've always been a journalist who urged upon my associates and colleagues the role of involvement and participation in the breaking news about them. I was

what is called now an "investigative" reporter. I believe in press involvement. I believe in editorial advocacy. But it seems to me that this is a time for those of us who are in the press to be aware that the changing life of this nation is in the grip of a value struggle between what once was and what now is; between the movement from rural to urban.

Now may be the time for less involvement, less advocacy; now may be the time for analytical introspection on the part of the press. Now may be the time for the reporter to understand what is on the country's mind, not just what the nation's gut reaction is to the confusion and complexities of changing life.

I came up in the South inbred with a special pride in the region. In retrospect I find no rational foundation for the regional pride instilled in me by my parents and teachers who convinced me that I, or rather "we," were "better" or "more blessed" than Westerners, Easterners and certainly Northerners. I never realized we had more problems in the South. As I look back occasionally, and read the Southern press of my childhood, and young adulthood, and indeed the press of the present, I find it difficult to establish that those who have been in the field of Southern journalism have ever recognized that we were not better and more blessed than "the Yankees."

As I became a journalist almost 30 years ago, I found that the problems of the South were matters attracting growing national press interest to our region. The press elsewhere, when I would travel outside, was more than a little interested in the fact that we were poorer, less well educated, less industrialized, but trying; more prejudiced toward minorities; more fundamentalist in our religious beliefs; more "country" in our musical tastes; generally less well equipped to confront and deal with 20th century problems than other regions. We were, more than anything else, a rural society. We

may have seen all this as weakness. But primarily we saw it as a challenge which we could overcome.

As a region, we sought to do something about our weakness. We craved to share the industrial progress of other regions. We wanted, we told ourselves, a piece of that industrial pie. It was inevitable that once we were impregnated by the industrial giant that the pregnancy would ultimately rob us, not only our virginity and chastity, but of the quality of much of our rural way of life as well. But, we told ourselves, we have plenty of land, plenty of water, plenty of cheap labor, plenty of cheap electric power, plenty of political clout resident in the senority system in the halls of Congress. If our way of life is studied, or slower, that indeed is a blessing. That's what we said and that's what we in the Southern press reported and believed.

We had a protective Southern press. Indeed, we still have if I read it accurately—even if I read those elements of it that are chain-owned and operated from regions outside our own. We Southerners told ourselves, and our press helped tell us, that despite the evils, dangers and difficulties, the potential for greatness was here; we said we could keep the best of what we had and take the best of what others had and that the confluence of urban and rural streams would make life beautiful and beneficial for us. If you honestly look back a few decades at where we were, you must admit that we believed we could have it both ways. A thorough review of editorial positions of Southern newspapers will document that the Southern press believed we could have it both ways. We were convinced, even as we bore the brunt of depression of the 1930's, that we could hold fast to the good old days and good old ways and still comfortably take on a share of busy urban life, which meant industrialized life.

The agrarians, those unreconstructed, angry elitist-academics Frank Smith mentioned a moment ago, some of them poets turned political ideologues,

took their stand in 1930 against the concept of having it both ways. I was raised and educated to think of them as "naive nuts." Industrialism was the inevitable way of the future of the South, I was taught. I accepted what the agrarian life-style, the agrarian tradition, would be diminished. But there was no place for those visionary romantics, some of whose motives I still suspect.

But the other day I went back and read John Crowe Ransom's piece in I'll Take My Stand wherein he said "industrialism is a program by which men, using the latest scientific paraphernalia, sacrifice comfort, leisure and the contemplative life to win Pyrrhic victories from nature." He sounds less naive today. Frank Owsley decried in his piece what he called "Juggernaut" (with a capital J) driving his car across the South. Now we are slaves to the automobile, nationally and regionally. And others of those "naive nuts" questioned with intellectual contempt the urban proponents who boasted of 20 miles of pavement in their communities. The agrarians asked, "for what?"

Well, we have found that those values, as visionary as they seemed--and we never really thought we'd lose them--and those words from those 12 conservative, conservation minded intellectuals sound less like empty echoes today. There is still a good deal of tripe in what they wrote; still a good deal to scoff at. As I say, their motives and their reasoning in some ways are subject to challenge. But they were not entitled to the violent negativism that was reflected when I'll Take My Stand was published 40 odd years ago. And particularly we in the press were brutal to them.

I mentioned the agrarians, not because the press gave cavalier treatment to what they had to say, but because we who are in the press are so immersed today in the hard news--the breaking news--around us that we perhaps are ignor-

ing dramatic transitions in the way we live, in the way many people think, in the doubts some in the society have about its future. What is of grave concern to me as a journalist is not so much where the country seems headed as to the failure many of us in the press--and indeed many in academic life--to understand what pushed us in this direction.

I listen to my colleagues in the Southern press. I talk with Southern academicians and intellectuals. I read publications of the Lamar Society and Southern Regional Council. It occurs to me as I absorb all this that we continue to kid ourselves. We seem to believe that within this poorer, less well educated, less industrialized, more fundamentalist Southern society that there are mystical answers to be had for the total society. I attend the conferences of regional leaders around the South, talk with my brothers (and a few token sisters) in Southern newspapers and meet occasionally with those who write and lecture the public on what's going on in our region. And I wonder if we see the world as it really is.

I can find nothing in the Southern racial experiences to commend our so-called solutions to Pontiac, Boston, San Francisco or anywhere else. We are still a racially separated South. We have a tolerance for tokenism but little more. We do not love blacks more because our grandsires nursed at the breasts of black mammies. And anybody who boasts of our sense of brotherhood being more sincere or profound than that of other regions simply hasn't looked recently at the membership roles of our country clubs, our civic clubs or at the successes of white Christian academies in every Southern suburb where busing has been decreed by the federal courts.

We are the heirs of at least the modern or more recent agrarian tradition, and somewhere imbedded beneath the rhetoric of progress which we preach

is always the shadow inference that here there is something special about "place" and "roots" and "family." Here, we claim, where the land was ours and remains ours, there is a difference; a difference in who we are and what we are and what our children should be. So we say. And, we tell ourselves, we are clinging to that aspect of our tradition in the face of a burgeoning industrial onslaught. We tell ourselves that. But I don't really think that's an honest appraisal of what we are or where we are. And it infuriates some fellow journalists when I suggest that editorials which rely on "place," "roots" and "family" as making a difference for "us" are more dream stuff than reality. We have pride in our region to the point of misleading ourselves.

As a region we are compromised and the agrarian tradition is irrevocably compromised. We're industrialized, we're homogenized, we're urbanized and we're getting more so. And what remains of the agrarian tradition is in and of itself industrialized. It has become a tradition taken over by nonagrarian conglomerates. Once we ingested the so-called "spirit of progress," we who inherited the most recent agrarian tradition have helped our region lose its way.

John Egerton, I think, comes closest to reporting on what's happened to us as a region in his book, The Americanization of Dixie, which at some point--perhaps even at the subtitle--comments on the "Dixification of America." For a while, every Southern city's Chamber of Commerce pointed to Atlanta as a model of what the "New South" should be about. The truth is the "New South" has been a rhetorical crutch for our pride probably since Henry Grady went North and proclaimed it to the Massachusetts Society. But we bragged about Atlanta. Atlanta became the branch office and industry annex capital of the world. Every other city in the South began to devise schemes to pirate industries and branch offices from the North. The Southern press led the

cheers with editorials supporting land giveaways, industrial bond write-offs, and special tax incentives to any Northern plants owners who would come South and employ folks being driven off the farms. We praised them for coming down and raping our land and polluting our water and hazing our air; making us more like Atlanta--and Atlanta more like Cleveland and Detroit.

A few weeks ago I was in Atlanta. Planes were not stacked up over that great city as planes were stacked up last time I was in New York, but there was a delay. Smog over Atlanta as we drove in that early morning was not as heavy as last time I was in Los Angeles, but the haze was there. The interstate was packed, hotels were jammed and all the businessmen were complaining about downtown Atlanta's troubles.

It occurred to me as strange that Atlanta can't even claim to be the city with the first black mayor. Cleveland and Gary and other Northern cities, where white flight took hold even before it occurred in Atlanta, robbed Atlanta even of that "progressive" image.

The Americanization of Dixie has left our rural areas vacated--the few who remain struggling on small farms, or running machines on giant monopoly farms, are robbed of adequate educational opportunities for their children; robbed of adequate health care services for themselves and for the elderly; robbed of much of the dignity that went with the old agrarian way. And in the cities we have imported industrial "blessings," which have become curses; we have exported North, East and West some of our poor whites and blacks who have come to inhabit hillbilly havens and core city ghettos of other climes. And it seems to me that any discussion--any <u>honest</u> discussion--of confrontation between urban and rural values in this Bicentennial year is fatuous, because there are no <u>meaningful</u> differences today that I can discern, North and South.

And what differences there are are vanishing. We have become one national society, and still we in the South cling to the myth that we are different. We are not.

If there were any doubts about that, I think we might have looked even four years ago at political realities in the land and observed the emergence of a Southern candidate named George Wallace who represented, in a very real sense, the worst and perhaps the last of the worst, of the agrarian tradition. He was a unique candidate. He said the same thing North and South and East and West, and his appeal was national, if limited.

I live in a city which is the country music capital of the world. I should have known long before George Wallace's minimal success that there was a yearning, a searching, a thirsting for what we were losing. Every weekend my city is flooded by Northerners, Easterners and Westerners who are desperate to go to a place--which for me is real torture to attend--the Grand Ole Opry. They sit there, those "good old boys" from all over, with their ladies handsomely coiffeured and they drink in nostagically this music that literally was laughed at nationally when I was in my teens, and which now has this country by the throat. The "Southerners" in the audience are rarely a majority.

Now four years after George Wallace became a "major" Presidential candidate there is another "Southern" candidate who finds even broader national acceptance and whose popularity, I submit, documents even further something of the homogenization of this country.

And if I have criticism of the press in this political year, if I worry about our inadequacies or our failures in covering how we reached this present state of circumstances whereby Governor Carter has literally captured the imagination of the country; if I have self-criticism, it is more because we

who are in the press have concentrated more on his astuteness, his political genius, and his ability to attract votes, and have ignored what this country's electorate is about as it has found itself attracted to him.

Jimmy Carter is a man who has won broad support, not despite his rural, Southern, religious background, but, perhaps, because of it. What concerns me most about the failure of our press, this press of which I am a part today, is that we are given to oversimplification; to using dramatic symbolism to make a point. I scoffed as I viewed the early course of this political year: first belittling the prospect that Jimmy Carter would do anything more than knock George Wallace out of the running. Jimmy Carter was, after all, more respectable, by the standards of "decent folks" than Governor Wallace. Then I dismissed Jimmy Carter when he sat in our editorial board six months ago and said "I'll never lie to you"; when he said, "I'm going to be President." I think Jimmy Carter is a human being with human failings. I think he is going to lie, and I think he is going to be President. I think he signifies the troubled soul and changing spirit of this country. He represents lost hope and a recognition on the part of so many people that we've wandered from the way we were.

As President, he will be as urbane and as sophisticated and as energized--as "Northern"--as he must be. He will be as committed as any other man to the needs of industrial America. Certainly, he'll make his bow toward the agrarian tradition. Certainly, he will recall again and again--as appropriations for agriculture and rural life continue to represent less of a percentage of the total federal budget--those humble beginnings in Plains, Georgia, where he came up as a peanut farmer. But he cannot turn the tide of industrial history.

As a journalist, a discussion of the agrarian tradition is helpful to the press only to the degree that it tells the press--in the hope that we can inform the rest of the nation--the truth: that the tradition is dying and may be dead. The sooner our land--the agrarian South--can tell itself the truth and the sooner the Southern press can help us understand that truth and help us realize that the agrarian way, in its historical sense, has gone forever, then I think the healthier and happier our people will be.

I said last January in an early Bicentennial speech that I thought after 200 years (and particularly after more than 100 years) the time had come for the South to join the nation. I say now--and maybe Jimmy Carter's candidacy proclaims it more dramatically than anything else--the time has come for the nation to recognize it is joined. The question is whether either rural or urban ways have value as long as they are treated in a spiritual or symbolic sense. I think such symbolism is meaningless in 1976 if we ignore reality. The time has come when we who are heirs to the agrarian tradition must tell ourselves the truth about our society and what it has become. I suspect and hope that these comments, particularly for this audience, may be provocative if not controversial.

JEFFERSONIAN THOUGHT IN AN URBAN SOCIETY

William Bruce Wheeler*

Many problems faced those men who led Americans in their successful War for Independence from Great Britain. Not only did they have to direct and coordinate the armed insurrection, but they also had to guide the former colonies past the hazardous post-war shoals into the "boisterous sea of liberty," translating the ideological thrust of the Revolution into permanent institutions, traditions, and precedents. Indeed, if their collective talents were considerable, so also were their tasks enormous and complex.

Yet, perhaps the greatest dilemma of this generation came years after the successful rebellion, even as old age limited their powers as well as their numbers. On one hand these men felt obliged to clarify for succeeding generations what <u>they</u> had meant to achieve in declaring their independence from the mother country—indeed, there is evidence that the men and women who had not remembered the momentous struggle <u>wanted</u> the so-called Founding Fathers to bequeath to the future their collective memory. Yet, on the other hand, these aging patriarchs felt equally called upon to maintain the <u>fluidity of the continuing revolution</u>, to be fought and achieved <u>not</u> by one generation but rather by <u>each generation of Americans in its own way in its own time</u>. Succinctly put, the dilemma for those of the aging revolutionary generation was in one sense to maintain the purity of the original rebellion and in the other sense to communicate the belief that each generation must define the Revolution for itself. In truth, the ideological problem was profoundly important.

---

*Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Perhaps no one of the Founding Fathers was more sensitive to this complex problem than was Thomas Jefferson, the graying patriot who at 33 years old had articulated the larger meaning of the Revolution to a "candid world." So besieged was the farmer of Monticello by those who groped for the original intentions of the successful rebels that, to turn young Americans from a mindless veneration of the past to an intelligent confrontation with the present, Jefferson revived his older idea of the sovereignty of the living generation, the belief that one generation

> may bind itself as long as its majority continues in life; when that has disappeared, another majority is in place, holds all the rights and powers their predecessors once held, and may change their laws and institutions to suit themselves. Nothing then is unchangeable but the inherent and unalienable rights of man.[1]

Yet, for all his efforts, Jefferson was unable to discourage or turn away the entreaties of younger men who sought the mantle of legitimacy for their own schemes from one who had participated in the momentous struggle of 1776. In 1824 William Ludlow, a quixotic dreamer who sought to return Americans to their nobler agrarian past, solicited Jefferson's blessing for an experimental community of 70 families which would recapture the simpler life of the soil. In this way, Ludlow believed, the spirit of 1776 would be revived and never lost.

---

[1] Jefferson to Major John Cartwright, June 5, 1824, in Merrill D. Peterson, ed., The Portable Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1975), p. 580. For a fuller expression of this idea see Jefferson to Samuel Kercheval, July 12, 1816, Ibid., pp. 559-560. The concept of the sovereignty of the living generation is implicit in the arguments of Jefferson to John Adams, October 28, 1813, Ibid., p. 539, and in Jefferson to Benjamin Austin, January 9, 1816, Ibid., p. 548.

But Jefferson's reply to Ludlow was curiously evasive:

> You seem to think that this advance [from the state of nature to modern civilization] has brought on too complicated a state of society, and that we should gain in happiness by treading back our steps a little way. I think, myself, that we have more machinery of government than is necessary...[2]

The Virginian's evasiveness was but another way of stating--albeit gracefully--his belief in the sovereignty of the living generation. However nostalgic Americans (like Ludlow) might be about the simple agrarian past, Jefferson was perceptive enough to realize that the growing republic could not turn back the clock of history, could not return to the mythic society of farmers. Indeed, as the sage of Monticello himself confessed (in his oft-noted 1816 letter to Benjamin Austin), "There was a time when I might have been so quoted with more candor, but within the 30 years which have since elapsed, how are circumstances changed!"[3]

Yet, Ludlow cannot be blamed for his innocent error in assuming that the aging Jefferson would have been enthusiastic about his plans for returning America to its agrarian infancy. Jefferson's own love of the soil and the people who worked on it led many of his contemporaries--as well as generations of subsequent historians--to confuse the Virginian's preference for rural life with more important tenets of Jeffersonian faith and goals. Indeed, by placing agrarianism at the center of Jeffersonian philosophy, Ludlow and

---

[2]Jefferson to William Ludlow, September 6, 1824, Ibid., pp. 583-584.

[3]Jefferson to Austin, January 9, 1816, Ibid., p. 547. Jefferson was referring to those who employed his name and words against the rise of American manufacturing centers after the War of 1812. Jefferson's earlier antiurban statements are legion. See his Notes on the State of Virginia, Torchbook edition (New York, 1964), pp. 157-158; to John Jay, August 23, 1785, in Julian Boyd, ed., The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, VIII, p. 426; to Count Gysbert-Charles Van Hogendorp, October 13, 1785, in Paul L. Ford, ed., Writings of Thomas Jefferson, IV, pp. 104-105; to Dr. Benjamin Rush, September 23, 1800, Ibid., VII, pp. 458-459.

others misread and thereby warped the various components of what can be called Jeffersonian thought.

The purpose of this essay is to attempt to unravel that thought with a view toward placing the agrarian tradition in its proper place in the Jeffersonian system. It is hoped that such an analysis will demonstrate that Jeffersonian beliefs are not as outdated as the mythical self-sufficient homestead, that those beliefs were seen by Jefferson himself as encompassing more than the fields and forests of the young republic, that our judging of the successes or failures of our urban-industrial society are in almost direct proportion to the extent to which that society has held to or discarded the faith and ideas of the sage of Monticello. In truth, though Jefferson's heart was probably always with the farmer, his ideas are the monopoly of no one group of Americans. For one who believed in the sovereignty of the living, such could never be so.

The various tenets gathered under the ideological umbrella called Jeffersonian thought can most properly be divided into three separate categories: 1) Jeffersonian faith, those components in which Jefferson believed, sometimes tried to prove, but most often accepted as assumptions from which other arguments flowed; 2) Jeffersonian ends, those goals which the man from Monticello reasoned to be timeless aspirations of human beings worthy of pursuit; and 3) Jeffersonian means, those changing plans and programs designed by each generation in order to attain the ends and keep the faith. Such divisions, which Jefferson did make, though unsystematically and irregularly, show to what extent Jeffersonian thought is still applicable in a world which to him would appear so strange and even inhospitable.

Jeffersonian faith can best be described as an interesting blend of the eighteenth century enlightenment and America's nascent nationalism. To begin with, the Virginia sage believed in the basic goodness and worth of humankind, that generally human beings were reasonable and on the whole just, compassionate and intelligent. That he was disappointed and disabused time after time is undeniable; that his faith in man remained generally unshaken is equally sure.

Secondly, Jefferson believed that the Creator had bestowed upon each human being natural rights, rights which might need to be defended but never earned, rights which came to humans regardless of earthly condition. Though he often elaborated on these rights in later writings, his eloquent statement about "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" is sufficient to note that these rights were broad and their limits almost unreachable.

Yet, while all men were basically good and were equally endowed by God with a full complement of natural rights, this did not mean to Jefferson that all were in an equally advantageous position to <u>exercise</u> those rights or to <u>display</u> that basic goodness. A central article of Jeffersonian faith was a belief that the new United States was an unmatchable land, a unique opportunity for men to exercise their God-given rights, to live in natural peace and human goodness. Thus, Jefferson was a <u>nationalist</u>, who bristled at criticism of the new nation and compared it favorably with all other experiments on his troubled globe.

Jeffersonian faith, then, can be summarized under the rubrics of human goodness, human rights and American uniqueness. Such were his "givens" and from them Jefferson diligently though unsystematically constructed what he believed were the proper <u>ends</u> of society and the <u>means</u> that Americans should adopt to fulfill them.

Throughout his entire adult life, Jefferson never wavered from what he believed to be the constant and changeless ends of human society: 1) liberty, and 2) human progress. For Jefferson, liberty was an extremely broad (almost boundaryless) concept which included independence, individualism, freedom of the human mind. Usually the sage of Monticello used the term in its broadest possible way, as in "the tree of liberty" or the "boisterous seas of liberty." Societies were judged by how much freedom each citizen was able to exercise. Since Jefferson's faith accepted human goodness, liberty would not be abused, nor would it inject centrifugal forces into the society at large.

As with the concept of liberty, Jefferson's idea of human progress was extremely broad, generally ill-defined, used in a variety of ways. Sometimes it referred to Americans in general in an interesting marriage of economics and cultural improvement. In his 1824 letter to Ludlow, Jefferson sounded vaguely like the later Frederick Jackson Turner as he wrote of various and progressive plateaus of civilization which one would ascend as he traveled from the western wilderness to the eastern port cities. At other times Jefferson saw human progress as an individual affair, with each person improving himself/herself economically and culturally until the American civilization as a whole would be the most advanced, the best civilization in which one could hope to live.

Thus, to the Virginia patriarch, liberty and human progress were the proper ends of every society. Combined with his faith that America was uniquely blessed with the resources and human talents through which these ends could be achieved, Jefferson's picture appears as an exceedingly optimistic one for future generations to whom the torch of revolution would be passed.

But as a practical thinker as well as political leader, Jefferson had to proceed to the question of what <u>means</u> might best be used <u>by his generation</u>

to achieve these ends. It was here that (along with the idea of a simple republican government) Jefferson conceived of the agrarian republic, the society of farmers as the best road toward pursuit of his cherished goals. Hence to the farmer of Monticello, the agrarian way of life was not an end in itself but rather merely a means, a pathway toward his true ends of liberty and human progress. In this sense Jefferson's lauding of the rural life can be seen as an example of a crude type of environmentalism, the process of altering the human environment to fulfill human needs.

Jeffersonian thought went further still. Not only was he convinced that the pastoral life was a better means to pursue man's constant searching for liberty and progress but the Virginia planter further believed that his faith could not be maintained nor his ends achieved in a nonagrarian society. When one examines his antiurban writings, it is clear that it was not the city per se to which Jefferson objected but rather that urban living was a poor (perhaps impossible) method for meeting human needs. In his Notes on the State of Virginia (1785), perhaps his most famous antiurban diatribe, Jefferson stated his position clearly that those "who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever He had a chosen people" because

> Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example. It is the mark set on those, who, not looking up to heaven, to their own soil and industry, as does the husbandman, for their subsistence, depend for it on casualties and caprice of customers. Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition. This, the natural progress and consequence of the arts, has sometimes perhaps been retarded by accidental circumstances; but, generally speaking, the proportion which the aggregate of the other classes of citizens bears in any State to that of its husbandmen, is the proportion of its unsound to its healthy parts, and is a good barometer whereby to measure its degree of corruption.[4]

---

[4] Notes on the State of Virginia (Torchbook edition), p. 157.

Therefore, Jefferson's association with the agrarian way of life as an end in itself was and is a misreading of his intentions, thoughts and words. To him farming was a means--and a means which might not work for succeeding generations who, given his belief in the sovereignty of the living, were free to choose what were for them the best paths to pursue the timeless constants of liberty and human progress.

Indeed, the linking of Jeffersonian faith, ends and means in an indisoluable chain of ideas was already slightly out of date by the time that Jefferson articulated them. By the election of 1800 his political coalition was already supreme in most of the port cities of the young republic, places where Jeffersonian ends were being linked not to the agrarian life but to the commercial one.[5] Jefferson's own letter to Ludlow appears to recognize this important trend, one that continues even today. Simply put, industrialization, urbanization and the commercialization of agriculture have triumphed (as Jefferson himself predicted they would), thus creating the problem not of how to return (as the idealistic Ludlow would have done) to the simple farm but rather how to maintain the Jeffersonian faith and achieve the ends he and others sought in a nonagrarian environment. Or must Jefferson's faith and ends necessarily perish as the percentage of America's population who are farmers decreases? Can Jeffersonian thought transcend field and farm to the modern industrial world? Can generations yet to come (upon whom Jefferson pinned so much hope) reach Jefferson's ends without his means?

---

[5]Jeffersonians triumphed in every major city in 1800, excluding Charleston. New York, Boston, Baltimore and Philadelphia (counting the neighboring areas of Northern Liberties and Southwark) all had chosen Jeffersonian candidates for office in 1799 and 1800.

These questions can best be answered by 1) identifying the qualities of agrarian life which Jefferson believed were so important to the preservation of his faith and achievement of his ends, and then 2) analyzing how (or if) those qualities can be transplanted to the urban environment. By adopting this method, we will most likely reach one of two conclusions: 1) that such qualities cannot be transplanted, in which case Jeffersonian faith becomes a relic of our past, or 2) that the cities for all their problems possess hospitable soil for the transplanting of these qualities, in which case Thomas Jefferson becomes a symbol for all Americans, not just for his rural compatriots.

Four basic qualities of agrarian life stand out as those which appear best to further Jeffersonian goals: 1) control and self-sufficiency, 2) homogeneity of interests, 3) naturalness, and 4) creativity. Note that all of these qualities can best be expressed in terms of ideology, of a person's perception, of almost a psychological quality of life. Note also that some of the areas overlap with others.

1. Control and self-sufficiency. Whether it is true or not, most Americans appear to agree that those who labor in the soil exercise more control over their own lives, both in a day-to-day fashion and in terms of long-range self-sufficiency. According to the mythic ideal, the farmer is apart from the interlocked, interdependent world that is the essence of the industrial-commercial specialized existence. While dependent on the weather and other factors, most people believe that the farmer is "in control" of most of the forces with which he has to contend.

The concept of control (as can be seen) has economic, political and psychological overtones. Farming is seen as more than making a living but rather as an entire way of life.

2. Homogeneity of interests. A farming community, so the reasoning goes, displays a sense of unity, completeness, homogeneity of interests. Men do not compete against each other but, instead, they battle the environment. Culturally there appears (especially to the outsider) a sense of "oneness," as all in the community appear to share the same general goals and aspirations, respect the rights of others and designate no special privileges to any group. Economically the farmer complements but does not compete against the storekeeper, the banker, and the manufacturer. If anything, in such communities the interests of the farmer dominate the interests of other people. As in the individual life, in the community the farmer is in control.

An important part of this mythic ideal is the concept of sharing, of helping neighbors in distress, of cooperating in larger projects, of trading one specific talent for another. This is possible because the goals of the participants are so similar; indeed, they are identical.

3. Naturalness. The suspected artificiality of the urban world has set people once again thinking and idealizing the more natural life of the agrarian world. Closer attuned to the "rhythms" of the human body and soul, able to sidestep the artificiality of what the late historian Richard Hofstadter referred to as the "Age of Rubbish," avoiding an urban pace of life which (many believe) buries men and women long before their times, the agrarian tradition has been idealized as one in which the human spirit is more in tune with the natural laws of the universe. It is an argument which Jefferson would have well understood...though his own agrarian existence was considerably different from those of the yeomen he lauded.

4. Creativity. Many have come to believe that the sense of human uniqueness and human worth are more easily realized on the farm than in the factory. There is a sense of creation, of growth, of realization, of enjoying

the fruits of one's own toil, of pride in accomplishment, of being a partner with the Supreme Being in the great act of creation. How could it be possible, many ask themselves, that anyone else besides the farmer could establish such an indelible link in the great chain of being, the continuous act of creation? If the creations themselves are not grand (as those of a Carnegie or a Rockefeller or a Morgan), they are not accomplished by an army of laborers or a well oiled mass human machine, but rather by one person who can plan, execute and bask in his successes, however modest.

Thus, it is these qualities (control, homogeneity of interests, naturalness, and creativity) which Jeffersonians identified--and continue to identify--as the principal components of agrarian life which would best serve the Jeffersonian faith and achieve the Jeffersonian ends. Whether these qualities were actual components possessed by the farmers and yeomen of Jefferson's day is almost beside the point: the repetition of them by Jeffersonians and farmers alike made them real in the minds of Americans from that day to this. Indeed, they have become real, have been seen as the components indispensable to any realization of the Jeffersonian creed.

Can such qualities be transplanted to the modern world of industry and commercial agriculture? In other words, can the Jeffersonian faith stand and ends be achieved without the base (means) of the agrarian life? Or, as Jefferson himself might have asked, can each generation devise new methods with which to pursue the Jeffersonian constants in human society?

On the surface the answer appears to be no: control, homogeneity of interests, naturalness and creativity have been sacrificed by the modern world in favor of material comforts, increased standards of living, specialization

and that conquering goddess Progress. Even in their wildest self-delusions, it would appear impossible that the urban resident could convince himself that his world possessed those qualities associated with the agrarian way and without which any striving toward Jeffersonian goals would be absurd. How else can we explain the virulent antiurban sentiments so shrilly expressed by those who live in the centers of our greatest cities? How else can we account for absolute population losses experienced by many American cities over the past decade?[6] How else can we explain the surprising popularity of television shows such as "The Waltons" or "Little House on the Prairie?" Truly, on the surface, the answer may be a resounding negative.

Moreover, those who have fled the nation's cities in search of these qualities with which to pursue Jeffersonian ends and restore his faith generally have been disappointed. For, aside from cleaner air and lower crime rates, the very rural areas themselves can no longer be considered "agrarian" in the way in which Jefferson himself used the term. There the rise of commercial agriculture and scientific farming coupled with the decline of the once lauded, but now all-but-gone, self-sufficient homestead appear to have all but obliterated the qualities of rural life which Jefferson and Turner believed were so important to the maintenance of his faith and goals. In truth, the countryside--at least in this regard--has been "urbanized."

Clearly past attempts to infuse urban life with agrarian qualities have for the most part failed to accomplish their objectives. Perhaps, however, failures have occurred because those who have attempted these transplantations

---

[6] I would argue here that focusing on urban crime, educational and financial breakdown, and race are (to some urban residents) thinly disguised wails about loss of control, lack of homogeneity of interests, the unnatural pace of the city, the loss of the sense of human creativity.

have not recognized the true qualities (control, homogeneity of interests, naturalness, creativity) which have made the agrarian life so unique and so distinct from life in the towns and cities. Rather, they have tended to think in spatial terms, believing that the creation of parks, greenbelts, plazas and spread-out dwelling areas would somehow (mysteriously, one imagines) infuse into the urban setting a rural flavor and (it was hoped) an agrarian sense of living. But, because such efforts (which, at best, could be grouped under the rubric of "beautification") were established on false premises about agrarian life, they were doomed to failure.

Perhaps the most reasonable (and, in the end, the most productive) approach would be to find new qualities best associated with urban living which are consonant with Jefferson's faith and which would lead to the ends he sought. When such a search is made (and it is being made by urban sociologists and philosophers), it will be found that the qualities of INDEPENDENCE (control, homogeneity, naturalness and creativity) will have to be replaced by those of INTERDEPENDENCE, a concept which must be recognized by all those who live in the modern world, whether that world be New York City or Sevier County, Tennessee; whether that person be a machinist or a merchant or a farmer.

Is Jeffersonian thought (his faith and goals) out of place in the modern urban-industrial-commercial world? Can it stand without its agrarian base? The answer is yes...with reservations. Independence must give way to interdependence; self-sufficiency must give way to trust in the group (however heterogeneous that group might be); a sense of human worth must be seen in group rather than in individual terms. Such ideological recommitments may be difficult (indeed, will be difficult)...but they must be made, else Turner's dire predictions of 1893 will become realities.

Perhaps as important as any redirection of human attention from independence to interdependence as a proper method to pursue Jeffersonian goals is whether we as twentieth century Americans believe that we can accomplish such a mammoth task. Surely, we appear to suffer from a failure of will, a belief that we are in the grip of forces over which we have no control, a sense of helplessness as we are pulled into the maelstrom of social and ideological destruction.

It is appropriate that we remind ourselves of Jefferson's faith in us, that he believed strongly in the sovereignty of the living generation, that he was willing to pass his revolution on to us...to make it our revolution and our children's. Jefferson believed that he could (and we can) find those qualities which would best bolster his faith and seek his changeless goals in our time and the times to come. Indeed, it is his greatest legacy, that (in the words of the ancient oriental proverb) we would "do not what your ancestors did, but seek what they sought."

THE AGRARIAN TRADITION AND AMERICAN AGRICULTURE IN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

by

Harold F. Breimyer*

"It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or a county jail."

--Henry David Thoreau

"Good farming; clear thinking; right living."

--Henry Wallace

"The rural population is America's safeguard against foreign 'isms' and crackpot programs."

--Ezra Taft Benson

"A general equality of condition is the true basis, most certainly, of democracy."

--Daniel Webster

Although prophecy is risky, I venture one prediction: that the end of our Bicentennial year will find the American people not at all sure they have used the year well for either commemorating the past or dedicating the future.

It is not that our citizens lack constructive ideas about themselves individually or collectively. Our need is for a nexus. We are groping for a systematic way of posing our problems and outlining our opportunities.

My topic is appropriately phrased. The agrarian tradition serves acceptably as a theme, even though I will offer a caveat against trusting it too far. Certainly, agrarianism marked the historical period when we formed our national traditions. Also, the contrast between early agrarian and later industrial-urban society is sharp and significant.

---

*Perry Foundation Professor of Agricultural Economics and Extension Economist, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.

Ancient Agrarian Agriculture

Anyone who is farm reared and still farm oriented takes satisfaction in the respect yet held for the agrarian elements in our national heritage. In my opinion there is genuine respect, although somewhat less than declaimed in platform oratory. It is a better balanced respect than either extreme position illustrated in the first three opening quotations. If we indeed arrived at our Bicentennium not with reassuring confidence but mired in iconoclasm and lacking faith in our social and political institutions--that is to say, in ourselves--we can be grateful for any remaining anchors that we associate with agrarianism.

On many occasions I have spoken respectfully of the agrarian contribution to our national life and then have asked a pair of searching questions: 1) Does agrarianism have anything to offer in these troubled times? 2) Can it even save itself; or must our agriculture and the rural communities vanish into industrial-urban society?

Having begun on a positive note, we ought to mind our scholarly manners and be cautious about how much we attribute to agrarianism. We should first admit that agrarianism goes back many centuries beyond Jefferson's time. To assume that Jefferson's enlightened view of agrarianism was the universal one amounts to intellectual chauvinism. In my judgment the connection between our agrarian past and the traditional values we often call agrarian was, in large measure, circumstantial.

Certain it is that the small farm agriculture that Jefferson lauded was not the historic model of agrarianism. In the world's history interludes of small proprietorships were few and brief. Far more often the agrarian system was one of relatively isolated self-sufficient units of considerable size,

usually formed around an extended family or tribe. Later they became the estate.

Because they were the earliest units of human organization the tribal groups acquired a meaning that we still hark to. Then, as now, the agrarian unit revolved around the basic biology of crops and animals. Then, as now, that biology forced specialization of duties and acceptance of personal responsibility. But when we ask how the early tribe or the later estate set up its internal organization--its government--we beg for evidence of emerging democracy. Nay, not so! Seldom was that the case. Nor was there much internal trading. Tribal society was usually class structured, often with slavery as its base. John Hicks notes that the system tended to orient toward either a "corpus of tradition" or an autocratic "power center."[1] By convention or authoritarian decree tasks were assigned and the common produce distributed.[2]

The American Enlightenment

By the time of medieval Europe agrarian institutions had progressed only as far as feudalism, followed by the somewhat more liberal manorial system. According to Geiger, the difference was that in the manor the master-servant relationships were proprietary rather than fealty.[3] By this time the Enlightenment was reaching much of the European world. It arose in commerce and the new cities, not in agriculture.

---

[1]John Hicks, A Theory of Economic History, Clarendon Press, 1969.

[2]Least of all does the once popular cult of the noble savage have any validity.

[3]George Raymond Geiger, The Theory of the Land Question, MacMillan, 1936, pp. 156-159.

As every schoolgirl (or boy) knows, many of our forebears who arrived on eastern shores sought to break the bonds of Europe's restrictive agrarian system. Although the ferment of the Enlightenment gave them ideological rationale, they were aided immensely by their access to a virgin continent. Louis Hartz has pointed out that "where land was abundant and the voyage to the New World itself a claim to independence, the spirit which repudiated peasantry and tenantry flourished with remarkable ease."[4]

It was in this setting that Jefferson and others developed their ideas that a nation of small property holders would be the ideal base for democracy. Holding property, we will remember, was exalted above all other marks of distinction. Indeed, the Declaration of Independence almost was written in terms of "life, liberty, and property." We can grant much validity to Jefferson's principles even while conceding an element of hypocrisy also. Jefferson and his Virginia colleagues were not small farmers. They were planters, and they introduced not small proprietor agrarianism but the plantation system that was almost an exact throwback to the ancient tribal self-contained autocracy.

Significant Elements in Our Agrarian Tradition

The foregoing comments ought to make two points clear. One is that the agrarian tradition is neither immutable nor self-defining. It has itself evolved and tends to vary by time and place. The second comment is that we ought to desist from selectionism--from straining out what we regard as good

---

[4] Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955, pp. 17-18.

in agrarianism, and either denying or rejecting the rest. Much in agrarianism does not meet modern liberal tests.

Organic Unity

In my opinion, the basic and still most important component of the agrarian tradition is the notion of organic unity. It is grounded in the biolo of food production. Operationally it requires that specialized duties be assumed by each member of the unit. In the process it teaches the lesson of cooperative endeavor. Moreover, it tends to be vertical in its orientation. It binds selective stages in the food system together interdependently.

Let me remind that the ancient agrarian unit was comparatively small. Interdependence was close enough to be visible. One of the problems for our time is whether we have multiplied the size of the unit so much that all sense of organic unity disappears. If so, it is a treacherous thing to do.

I will not offer a firm judgment. Nevertheless, it is instructive that a few nations have designed their economies for decentralization. The Peoples Republic of China is an example. Although we do not know a lot about it, apparently one principle followed is that the individual communes are to be almost self-sufficient. Intercommunal trade is not expected to be great.

The Societ Union offers another illustration but it is more ambiguous. In a sense the USSR has gone all the way toward central direction. On the other hand, its state and collective farms involve a great deal more internal self-sufficiency that is generally known. The collective farm is not only an operating farm but contains the local government and public services. (The rupture, incidentally, is between the farm and the marketing system. Marketing is an entirely separate part of the soviet apparatus.)

A Market System

In a grand contradiction, even though the agrarian experience taught us the lesson of individual responsibility in interdependent relationships, our agriculture moved not to European type collective units but to a market system. Only in the farm family was an internal self-support structure retained. Otherwise, except in the plantations of the South, the haciendas of the West, and now the large corporate enterprises of both regions, the basic unit of agriculture was the family farm. It was and is both a production unit and a trading unit.

Although modern titans of trade would be loath to admit it, a market system for organizing an economy is largely a product of agriculture. Markets for farm products that came into being in the Middle Ages, instruments not only for delivery of goods but for establishing price, became prototype for the market system that spread through Western economies during the 18th and 19th centuries. What agriculture brought about, one hastens to add, was a market system, not a merchandising one.

Today agriculture is the only big sector of the economy that relies principally on market trading. Even it does so less and less; and one of the policy questions of our day is whether agriculture itself will retain its market-oriented decentralized structure. The commercial and industrial world has long since reverted to large integrated units reminiscent of the medieval period. Some industrial corporations are not only as big as whole nations but operate in about the same manner.

Respect for Natural Resources

The agrarian tradition gets a big gold star of credit for its respect for the resource of the land. Of ancient origin, this virtually religious

regard for conserving and protecting the land on which all humanity depends is indelibly a part of agrarianism.

How well is it held today? Everyone vocally subscribes to the principle. Farmers and nonfarmers alike testify to their conviction about protecting land. The performance record is mixed. Just now, all-out production is probably damaging the soil. Some Missouri farmers admit that in response to pressure and incentive during the last two years they have plowed up land that ought not be plowed. We are losing good farmland to nonfarm uses. Yet when proposals are advanced to retain good farmland, our farmers ask tax forgiveness without accepting restraints. In this sense we are not yet conserving.

Agrarian teaching about conserving land has not been extended to conserving and recycling depletable resources such as the metals, petroleum, and natural gas.

Egalitarianism and Democracy

Jefferson believed that a nation of small freeholders would protect democracy. He was correct, not because holding a little land makes a person a better citizen but because his vision was of a comparatively egalitarian society.

Comparative equality of status undergirds effective exercise of democracy. Princes and peons are not a good citizenry team.

When land was cheap and readily available, frustrating any quick return to a highly unequal, hierarchial structure, Jeffersonian agrarianism did, in fact, imply the sort of prideful status for each individual that is the essence of democracy.

How well is this condition being met now? Not very well. There is no more free land. Anyone trying to buy land can attest to its high cost. Is

agriculture reasonably egalitarian internally? We must be careful in our answer. Inasmuch as there still are two million or more individual farms, and only about a tenth of all farm production is in the hands of industrial type corporations, agriculture can still be called a sector of relatively small units. It rates well by egalitarian tests. On the other hand, a close look at the internal make-up of agriculture shows a highly skewed distribution of wealth and income. Agriculture has its own aristocracy of highly propertied, high income people. At last count it had a bigger proportion of poverty than the cities did. Big farmers scorn small ones and are interested mainly in buying them out. It is hard for a sector such as agriculture or for a nation to avoid progressive concentration of wealth. According to some evidence, we are not doing so in the United States today. We are becoming less egalitarian.

Other Agrarian Values

Any poll of opinions held by farmers reveals rather stereotyped patterns of values held. Always, some of the values are themselves conflicting. There is not time here to recount the usual findings. But as one example, farmers favor "commutative" over "distributive" justice, the former having to do with equality of opportunity and the latter with equality of rewards.

The late John Brewster used to point out that rural values put the work ethic at the pinnacle. Furthermore, rural values supposedly call for separating the real or genuine from the fiat or contrived. As though in refutation, farming has become a better source of capital gains than of operators' income. I have heard no clamor from the rural community to change the tax law.

Freedom of Thought

Does the agrarian tradition protect one of the vital requirements for democracy and for an open society, namely, freedom of thought? This principle too is easily subscribed to. It relates closely to egalitarianism and some of the values just mentioned. Whenever a prestigious, wealthy, political, or military class dominates a society, openness of discussion is endangered. This would happen quickly in an autarchial agriculture.

My experience in extension education in public affairs is that as a rule the agrarian tradition of openness and fairness still prevails. There are exceptions, however. In Southwest Missouri recently a speaker discussing regional land-use planning was threatened with bodily injury. The agrarian tradition has no room for that.

Where Will Agriculture Go?

Before asking whether agriculture and the rural community have anything new to offer society we must inquire whether agrarian agriculture can first of all save itself.

Agriculture is caught between its agrarian root and its industrial superstructure. The agrarian root is still the land together with the man on it who struggles to manage crop and animal biology under the stress of quixotic nature. The industrial component is not just industrial inputs nor even the technology that goes with them, but also industrial discipline and the industrial market that strives to rule over everything.

The agrarian-industrial liaison is still loose and tenuous. The traditional small unit proprietary family farm has survived only because it has been helped so much by government. When farmers boast that they have done it

alone, they are vainglorious. And when they say they can survive unsupported, they sow the wind and shall reap the whirlwind.

The grand irony in the whole issue is that the circumstances of Jefferson's day made it possible to restructure agriculture into the market linked autonomous family units that we associate with agrarianism; but industrial forces of today are pushing our agriculture back to the ancient vertical system. The difference is that the old tribal agrarian units put farming pursuits first, but in today's industrial integration market operations dominate.

Defenses

To date our agriculture has taken two kinds of defensive action. One is cooperative integration, that is, forward integration wherein farmers retain control. The other is defensive alliance. The latter is best known for the collective bargaining in fluid milk and various fruits and vegetables for processing, plus some block negotiation practiced by the National Farmers Organization. But the principle extends to the ever spreading commodity organizations. Commodity groups have largely concerned themselves with political action and with relatively innocuous activities such as commodity promotion. A few have exploited the marketing order mechanism for collective action. In the U. S. they have not yet taken the further step of forming marketing boards. (They would, of course, have to get legal authority first.) But they are aggressive.

Each of these directions is instructive relative to our assigned topic. Integrated cooperatives can indeed, if successful, keep farmers in control but under different terms than the market-trading family farmer; furthermore, they introduce at once the age-old question of the system of internal government. Agribusiness integration uses the devices of corporate administration. Farmers

say they want democracy in their cooperatives. Many also say they are not getting it.

So, if we inquire about institutional innovation, as James Shaffer did some years ago,[5] we can call the integrated farmer cooperative an example.

Commodity organizations are of opposite significance. They are small, closely knit power centers. If integrated structures epitomize organic unity, however arrived at, commodity groups contribute nothing to unity of the system. Significantly, commodity organizations are displacing general farm organizations, which in the past have played a unifying role.

Where Will the Economy Go, and Can Agriculture Lead It?

We end where this Forum began, with the question of whether agrarianism can contribute to national polity in the upcoming third century of our national existence. Unfortunately, we have complicated the discussion by recognizing two versions of agrarianism, the ancient and that of Jefferson's day that has become our tradition.

In the foregoing analysis no attempt was made to articulate the alarms of our day. It has seemed sufficient to cast them in terms of weakening of organic unity. That alone, though too simple, can be surrogate for various other social diagnoses, such as Etzioni's language stressing "loss of legitimation and...of meaning." Etzioni adds, "As legitimation weakens, the policy, from the head of state to the rookie policeman, from the law of the land to traffic regulations, no longer seems justified, acceptable, or, indeed,

---

[5] James D. Shaffer, "On Institutional Obsolescence and Innovation--Background for Professional Dialogue on Public Policy," American Journal of Agricultural Economics, May, 1969, pp. 245-267

to make sense."[6] Daniel Bell writes of "the growing disjunction between the 'culture' and the 'social structure.' Society becomes more functionally organized....The culture becomes more...distrustful of authority...."[7]

A small but eloquent school of thought now preaches return to small unit organization of the economy and of society. E. F. Schumacher and Hazel Henderson are becoming familiar exponents. Some of us are as sympathetic as we are skeptical. The compelling evidence is that we are going the other way. The industrial structure is growing ever larger, more powerful, more assertive. It operates by the techniques of administrative management. Even government, says Thompson, now "moves away from representative democracy to executive management."[8]

Although calls are heard for inserting democracy into industrial structure they are not being hearkened to. Insofar as farmer cooperatives can make their internal democracy a reality and not just a slogan, they can teach something important to the industrial world. We can wish them success.

Instead, the route being taken is that of developing a parallel structure, fractionated, Balkanized, composed of narrowly circumscribed self-interest groups. Commodity organizations in agriculture are examples, although in no sense can they be charged with leading the way. It is more accurate to say that they are mimicking, or conforming.

---

[6]Amitai Etzioni, "The Search for Political Meaning," The Center Magazine, March/April, 1972, pp. 2-8.

[7]Daniel Bell, essay in A Great Society?, Bertram M. Gross, editor, Basic Books, 1967.

[8]William Irwin Thompson, "Walking Out on the University," Harper's, September, 1973, pp. 70-76.

All of which brings me to a position I have been espousing, with foreboding and regret, for a decade. It is that our economy is being converted to what I call syndicalism. This is a mosaic of tightly organized self-interest groups. Each operates as autonomously and selfishly as it can, without regard for the unity and cooperative interdependence that are essential to common survival.[9] The rationale is of a sort of gravitational equilibrium, as each offsets the other presumably to a mutually acceptable outcome. The analogy is entirely from the world of physics; it is mechanical. The ancient agrarian structure units of unity of the ancient agrarian structure was, by sharp contrast, organic. Perhaps we should be selective in our imagery!

Conceivably the thousands of interest groups can work out acceptable accommodations. We can wonder. Among reasons for doubt, our system of democratic government was not designed for the kind of economy that is emerging. My worst forebodings are that syndicalistic units will be the administrative entities for executing terms of accommodation that will not be negotiated but imposed by central authority. We could wish that the authority would be democratic. We may be disappointed.

So I suppose my message is that agrarian traditions, though not themselves pure and undefiled, are on the whole constructive and could contribute a great deal to resolving our common problems at this Bicentennial point in our national life. But my realistic judgment is that agriculture is not even addressing its own structural problems effectively. It is, therefore, question-

---

[9]It's late in this paper to point this out, but we should acknowledge that the terms "organic unity" and "cooperative interdependence" are roughly equivalent to other words that are used often, such as "consensus" and sense of "community." There must be some recognition of commonality, some deference to common interests, before human beings can deal effectively with their social problems.

able whether it and the rural community will be able to teach to all of us the important lessons that it cannot apply even to itself.

CHANGING RURAL VALUES - FOCUS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

by

Walter N. Lambert*

America has too many counties. Larger units could operate more efficiently. The role of the counties has changed so drastically since the time of their inception that a general overhaul and consolidation of counties is necessary. So has gone the orthodoxy of the political scientists for 50 years. They have noted with some pride that Connecticut abolished counties. They have failed to note that tradition had long since taken away their function. They have preached for regional government, but they have not provided doctrine of what regional government is to do. Only if forced do they acknowledge that only one county consolidation has ever taken place in Tennessee and that this consolidation was more a matter of a county taking in its poor neighbor than a true consolidation. I know their argument very well because I have been one of them for several years.

The American county, which is the most universal form of local government in America, just happened. The county and its basic form was imported from England and can trace its ancestry directly to the English shire. Although counties have existed from the earliest days of the country, the federal consititution was completely silent in regard to them. This is not surprising since counties and cities were looked on from the very beginnings of this country as creatures of the state. Prevailing law in this country on local government today still holds that local government in all its forms is a

*Special Assistant for Federal Relations to the Executive Vice-President, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

creature of the state existing at the state's pleasure. Tennessee courts have consistently held that our inherent right to self-government does not extend to local self-government. It is then tradition and now law which demands the maintenance of county government.

Functions of the County

Basically counties were first created for three purposes: to be administrative arms of the state, to be the basic representational unit and unit for the organization of the political parties, and finally, and least importantly, units of local government. In states in the eastern portion of the country, an almost universal rule in drawing the outer boundaries of counties was that a person should be able to ride from any point in the county to the county seat and back on horseback in a single day. In the 1870's constitutional convention, fearing the splitting into an infinitely large number of counties, there was placed in the constitution a minimum size limitation.

As important as the small size of counties is the fact that they have almost universally in the country been kept loosely organized and dominated by an enormous number of elected officials. County governments are in most states not unitary governmental forms but confederations made up of independent, popularly elected officials who are often more separated than joined both by law and tradition. Traditionally, Tennessee counties could be divided into as many as 25 civil districts with two members of the county court to be elected from each civil district. An additional member of the county court was allowed for each incorporated town. This produced a county court in one West Tennessee county of 60 members.

In addition to the county court, the constitution of Tennessee requires that the sheriff, the trustees, the registor of deeds, and such clerks of the

courts as may be established, be elected by the people. It is not uncommon to also find the tax assessor, superintendent of schools, and school board, all elected by the people. The universality of election was, in the best Jacksonian sense, expected to keep the government close to the people. Time has done little to change this situation. In Knox County, Tennessee, there are 65 popularly elected officials today.

Population Distribution

In 1962 there were 91,237 units of government in the country. By 1972, that number had dropped to 78,000. Since we know in advance that 51 of these are nonlocal governments, we are left with some 77,049 local units of government. In 1962, 3,043 of these were counties. By 1972, that number had been reduced to 3,043. This indicates something less than an overwhelming trend toward county consolidation in the country. Of these 3,043 counties, 18 have over one million in population, 311 have over 100,000, and 1,202 have more than 25,000 people living within them. It may be even more significant to note that we still have within the country 102 counties with fewer than 2,500 people within the county. Loving County, Texas, has long been cited as the smallest county in the country. In 1962, 224 people lived within its 961 square miles. In the 10 years from 1962 to 1972, that number was reduced from 224 to 164. It seems significant to me that 11 of the 18 counties in the country with over one million in population are either in the northeast or in the far west.

Tennessee fits closely with the nation pattern. Of Tennessee's 95 counties, three have fewer than 5,000 people. Seventeen have fewer than 10,000, while 55 of the 95 counties have fewer than 25,000. Only five counties have more than 100,000 people within them. and of these five, four have more than

250,000, leaving only one county in the state in the whole range between 100 and 250,000 people.

A Changing Role for the County

Over the past century, sharp changes have taken place in the role of the county. These changes have been particularly marked in the past 20 years, for in this period the two principal roles of county government, that of administrative arm of the state and that of political unit, have both steadily decreased. States today are increasingly likely to turn to regional agencies of one sort or another as their administrative units. The one person-one vote rulings of the U. S. Supreme Court have necessitated breaking away from counties and going to smaller units to maintain the required equality in representational units. Increasingly, counties have come to be called on as prime units of local government.

Traditionally, counties have provided roads, schools, and a means for registering property ownership. In some few cases, they provided minimal health services, libraries, and sometimes limited welfare programs. In addition to these traditional services, counties of all sizes today find themselves bombarded with demands for what has in the past been viewed as municipal services. These would include sewer systems, water systems, fire protection, street lights, ambulance service, indigent hospital care, and an ever growing list of other services. As this has happened, the form of the county has seldom changed to deal with the changing function. Two major forces have served to dampen the efficiency argument which have called for restructuring of county organization and for the consolidation of counties in the face of these increasing service demands. One such force is systems of distribution of

funds which channel monies to counties simply because they exist as general purpose units of government. The distribution of the state collected sales tax is one such activity in Tennessee. School funds in Tennessee and in many other counties are distributed to or through county government. Federal general revenue sharing did much to increase this pressure or separateness. Another strong force, and endless debate could be generated about which of the two of these is stronger, is that of tradition. The artificial line drawn on a map which separates one county from another can, with a hundred years of practice, become very real. At the same time, pressures to consolidate either totally and politically or at least in functional service areas has come from the efficiency argument of local government and from the pressures of technology. Economies of scale became a continuing catch phrase in promoting larger service units. Water systems and sewer systems can be shown to be much more effective if large rather than small.

A prime example of the pressures of technology can be seen in the attempt to develop in eastern Tennessee a solid waste recovery and disposal complex most often called wasteplex. Wasteplex said that if you brought together all the solid waste generated in the 16 counties of the East Tennessee Development District plus the 13 counties of the Southeast Tennessee Development District and of all the cities within them that it would be possible to operate a sophisticated, efficient, and relatively inexpensive solid waste recovery, recycling, and disposal operation. Wasteplex insisted that such an operation could be economically feasible only if carried out on an enormous scale. The engineers somehow seem to look on the problems of bringing together almost 30 counties and more than 80 cities as a trifling matter that could easily be taken care of. Wasteplex never came close to happening.

County Consolidations

Despite the continued resistance of a large segment of the population to the abandonment of any existing unit of government, strong arguments continue to be made for the increased efficiencies to be achieved through consolidation of counties, consolidation of cities and counties, or regional organizations made up of voluntary or involuntary groupings of existing local government. I have argued in favor of such changes for some years and still basically believe in the need for continuing reforms. Increasingly, however, I have become convinced that we must examine the efficiency arguments more carefully against potential losses in citizen involvement and reduced responsiveness of local government units which could be a part of consolidation into larger units. Please note that I said such losses could be, not would be, a part of such changes. A number of studies are now going on which seek to evaluate the limit of the economies of scale in government. Notable among these is a series of studies, many of which involve either Vincent or Elinor Ostrom, who have concerned themselves with how big is big enough. The Ostroms and their associates have made an interesting study in the efficiency of large versus small law enforcement agencies which have so far very clearly indicated that for many law enforcement functions, great efficiencies can be achieved by maintaining small forces. Conversely, these studies are showing that other functions can only be reasonably performed if carried out on an area wide or regional basis. I am convinced that we must continue to examine alternatives, not only in broad government service areas like law enforcement or education, but involved in subfunctions within them as well. I am convinced that we must be ever alert to structuring any service in a way that provides for the maximum involvement of the recipients of the service in continually

reviewing and evaluating the efficiency of services provided. We must view changes in local government structure as not only remaining as we are or going to some complete consolidation, but having a whole set of shadings in between which balance our desire for small responsive units with the needs for efficiency in providing service.

One other recent development is of particular interest to me in view of the pressures of technology mentioned earlier. I have in recent weeks learned of a company which is in the process of locating in Knoxville which has in the final stages of development a process which the company insists can handle either solid waste or sewage disposal in a manner which costs approximately the same amount per unit whether done for a few houses or a whole metropolitan area. The implications of such a breakthrough in relation to our tradition of small governmental units is extremely interesting.

This whole of developments seems to me to be arguing not for an abandonment of the ideas which served as an introduction to this paper but rather to a new kind of evaluation which says "yes, we'll consolidate, yes, we'll make governmental units large, but we will do it only if we know what we're giving up and what we'll gain. When we do it, we'll measure any potential loss in involvement, contact, and control of the citizen against any increases in efficiency to be gained, and then we'll decide if the change is worthwhile. We will argue for changes in service area and for changes in local government structure when we are certain that such changes will increase the responsiveness of government to its citizenry and increase their ability to participate in it." Such an evaluation seems to me to preserve the best of our agrarian tradition while allowing us to meet the needs of an urban nation.

THE AGRARIAN TRADITION AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF RESOURCE USE

by

Frank E. Smith*

Allow me to share with you the reason why I'm qualified to be an expert on agrarian philosophy. Back in 1948 I attended my first national political convention, which was the Democratic Convention in Philadelphia. In those days, before the TV had taken over political conventions, the press box--press stands--or whatever it was called--came down to meet the audience around the speaker's podium.

As I was going around as the rubberneck from rural Mississippi before the first session began, watching all of that big event, I noticed Mr. H. L. Mencken at the front of the press tables. So I introduced myself to him and talked a few minutes. We talked a little about some of the things that he had written about the so-called "Agrarian Bible Belt" of the United States. We were interrupted shortly by the opening of the convention. After the gavel had sounded someone, a religious dignitary, was introduced to give the invocation. I was still looking over the whole show, what to me was a very glamorous event, while this religious authority was getting his prayer out, when someone reached over and tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Young man, bow your head." I feel that I can safely say that I'm one of the few people in the country who has ever been admonished to pray by H. L. Mencken. So I prayed and as positive results of that prayer you all ought to pay attention to what I say.

---

*Author and formerly a Director of the Tennessee Valley Authority and a United States Congressman from Mississippi.

The Myth and the Reality

The agrarian tradition is part of a concept of American life that is, in part, an American myth. But I think it's also, in part, a very actual reality, part of the concept of the American pattern of destruction of natural resources. The American agrarian tradition has been a part of both the myth and the reality. In some cases the desecration and destruction of the resources of both land and water has been the result of the individual sins or the collective sins of the early American life-style. "Get all you can from the land while it's fresh with the deepest plow you can handle." What the plow doesn't take care of can be done with a match....It's cheaper to clear new land than to clean up and drain and rotate the old land.

Such indifference and ignorance have all added to the burden upon the American land, which is my way of saying the American natural resources, both the land and water, the minerals under that land and the renewable resources growing from that land. The destruction of that resource has primarily been accomplished by the economy of American agriculture, not by the individual sins of the farmer. The political economy which controls American agriculture has been primarily responsible. The cash crop system virtually destroyed entire acreages of Southern hills about us. Someone mentioned that many acres of topsoil have been lost by a lot of farmers who plowed hillsides they shouldn't have plowed. Perhaps some people could have afforded not to plow, but a lot of people had to plow those hillsides simply to keep from starving, or to keep themselves above what they thought was the starvation level of existence.

The Southern country banker was just as much a prisoner of this system as the farmer. And that applies, of course, to the country banker who financed farming operations all over rural America. But it applies more to the South than anywhere else.

The national effort is for conservation of natural resources, however, and its origin lies within the great strength among the bulk of farmers and rural citizens. A great exception is the almost religious fervor of a number of leaders who are entitled to a great deal of credit for the development of the American conservation movement. I refer to people like John Wesley Powell, W J McGhee and Gifford Pinchot. These were leaders, some of whom came up strictly from the farm. The first two came from hard, Midwestern farms. Yet, they were also very partial and effective politicians....They got involved and accomplished a great deal in what they did. They contributed by developing and putting some reality and some actuality into the political concept of conservation.

A Perspective on Public Land Policy

American public land policy shaped the development of conservation policy. In part, this policy was influenced by the concept of a lot of free available land which ought to be made available to everybody. Of course, we needed the land because we had already worn out the new cheap land. But it was the overall input and the evolving role of government in conservation policy that came as a direct outgrowth of public land policy. Public land policy relates to the agrarian tradition through the concept of the intrinsic values of free holding farmers.

The overall system of the disposal of public land came with the passage of the Homestead Act in 1862. Andrew Johnson of Tennessee was the author of this Bill. The Homestead Bill was enacted after long efforts by Andrew Johnson, but came about, incidentally, only after approximately 22 members of the United States Senate had departed to the Confederate states. They were representative of a type of agrarian tradition that was, perhaps, typifie

nearly 50 years ago by the Nashville agrarians. But they were not representative of the Jeffersonian agrarian tradition as I see it.

There were various modifications and public land policies before the Homestead Act was actually passed, but it didn't come into being until the secession of the Southern states made it possible for it to pass in the Senate. And because of this, I think, the agrarian tradition is not only typified by justice, but has been related to the populist concept in the rural influence on American farm policy, and has brought American farm policy to the American conservation policy through the years.

In the beginning farm policy was very little related to conservation. The closest thing to farm policy was the issue of the free coinage of silver to make money more available, or the regulation of the railroads, primarily because of the idea that railroads as they existed served to establish monopoly that was primarily destructive of the values and the needs of the farmer, with no real service to the needs of the American consumer. But there is a relationship between this shift in farm policy toward conservation and the increased emphasis on considering the needs and values of the consumer as well as the American farmer in formulating agricultural policy. There is not a direct confrontation all the time as some of our speakers have tried to indicate, and as, perhaps, my friend, Secretary Butz, sometimes believes.

I think that what we have to remember is that the first emphasis on conservation was the reservation of public land from disposal by President Cleveland and later President Harrison. This action marked the faint beginning of a positive conservation policy by the national government and came in good part from reaction among conservation leaders and their followers to the corruptness of the land disposal policy that had been carried on by the

federal government, other units of government, and the organizations and business firms that had been given land grants. I'm referring, of course, to the great railroad land grants that came after the Civil War, and to the way that many state governments corruptly disposed of land which had been given them.

For instance, so much land was given away in the Mississippi Valley from the federal government to the states. This was one of the first grant operations by the federal government. Mr. Lambert was discussing this in terms of the overall grants-in-aid that are being abolished today in favor of general assistance to the states. The handouts that were made back in 1850 to the states in the Swamplands Act are not too much different from the handouts given today in terms of block grants to the state, if it wasn't for the Congressional insistence on how some of that is being used.

Of course, there's Congressional reaction against, and there's public reaction against, some of the strings that are put on by the federal government about how this assistance should be given to the people whose hand has been held back from the till and don't like it. Quite often they make objections about it. But, actually, I think that the very fact that there's been historical reaction against corruption in this field and abuses of the natural resources is all linked to the agrarian tradition, because the people who resisted most strongly the abuse of the resources in this period were generally from rural areas, though they had allies from other parts of the country and the Congress.

While the worst abuses in the use of public lands took place in the Western states, some of the most outspoken strength and support for conservation policies also developed in the Western states. The reaction against the

abuse of natural resources was most prominent in intellectual circles throughout the country. But, as I said, conservation had its greatest impact in the rural areas where both the real and the imagined transgressions of the absentee landlord was closer to home. Abuses of the land could be reported from actual observation within the rural areas during the post-Civil War period when the first agitation on this issue was noted. Even this moral reaction would not have been enough had farmers and other elements of the rural economy not been uniting to support resource protection programs by the government.

The early efforts were accompanied by confusion as to what should be done and how to do it, but they were the forerunner of flood control and soil conservation programs and national forests and every other conservation activity of the government. The agrarian tradition that was in the best interests of the country first disposed the land into the hands of any citizen who wanted it, and culminated in the wild disposal of all federal land that was available to the farmer. The later reservation of the public domain was based on the deep rooted awareness that so much of the land had been made available to individual owners by the government. This helped establish the acceptance of governmental responsibility to help the farmer protect the quality of the land. Most federal programs emerge from this atmosphere.

The Jeffersonian Influence

And to go back again to the patron saint of the agrarian tradition in America, Thomas Jefferson, I think it's wise for us to look at some of the aspects of his agrarianism that perhaps are not so much featured. I'm referring to agrarianism as related to the protection of our natural resources. There was some mention, which I enjoyed, about Jefferson's revolutionary philosophy and the fact that he had an active role in the abolition of

primogeniture in Virginia, which may explain why it never gained acceptance in the new nation. This first aspect of land-use planning and land reform is often ignored. But if we go back a hundred years before in England, the concept that primogeniture was not sacred was as revolutionary a doctrine as you could imagine in terms of controlling land use. The whole idea developed from the notion that a landowner could not only control the use of the land and the people on it during the time that he was allowed, but he could do it for all his foreseeable progeny by the way he willed, not so much because of his own individual initiative but because of the system of primogeniture. Of course, it wasn't all that sacred, even though it was considered an erroneous policy, to a lot of second sons and other people even at the time it was being put into effect. And it wasn't, perhaps, in the revolutionary atmosphere of 200 years ago, as hard to do as you might imagine.

This is something to remember when pondering how we will decide about the use of the land: how much authority we have as the temporary holder of that ownership today and what decisions we can make for the future. A related issue is whether the agrarian tradition really dictates the idea that the landowner can prevent any type of land-use planning which protects that resource for the future. I think you can point out a lot of contradictions in the most active opponents to the concept of land-use planning today, because they have very strongly favored certain types of land-use planning in the way they offer suggestions about the tax system, for instance. This is an issue that has been fought out in Tennessee for the last few years. Taxation is always basically a part of land-use planning. It is certainly a type of planning, whether the decisions are good or bad.

But before we leave, I want to call attention to the fact that I regard Jefferson not only a philosopher of the agrarian tradition, but also one of the first philosophers of the American conservation concept which we might, today, call the American concept of ecology or environmental quality. His "Notes on Virginia" can be read for many types of directions, many points of appreciation, but I regard it as one of the documents of American conservation history. In fact, I incorporated a lot of it when several years ago I edited a compilation of the notable documents of American conservation history. Jefferson, a man who spent his whole life studying how government should relate to men and how they should live together under government, itemized and extolled with great interest all the natural wonders of Virginia. And, as such, was, in effect, preaching for their preservation and their protection, which places him first among our great revolutionary leaders as a spokesman for the conservation philosophy.

But, as I said earlier, there was a lot of confusion about where we should go, even though you could say that Jefferson was a great conservationist. Jefferson in his time, and his immediate successors like Madison and Monroe, and even slightly different ones like Jackson, had different ideas about how and what the federal government should do and the role it should take in conservation activity. President Jackson resisted some of the efforts of Calhoun in this direction. As Monroe's Secretary of War, Calhoun promoted a very active federal role that would have led to an active federal responsibility in economic development through the use of natural resources. And with this responsibility the concept, the idea, of conservation of resources would have been further developed.

But President Jackson, before becoming President--while he was Senator of Tennessee--had suggested that the federal government should take a role in

developing the Tennessee River. That idea took more than a century to come to fruition, though it was related to the agrarian concept. Because the main interest of people in Tennessee at that time was not to make aluminum airplanes through the navigation of the Tennessee River; rather, it was to ship produce on barges down the Tennessee to the market in New Orleans.

The agrarian tradition in this valley had a great deal to do with, not only keeping Aaron Burr and his friend General Wilkerson from splitting up the country, but the whole idea of people in this area having an international market through the Mississippi River. That same Mississippi River concept--of utilizing the Mississippi River for agricultural markets--was a part of why the country stayed unified. The farmboys in Illinois--some of them people like Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant who had gone down the Mississippi in those days--had a concept of a national economy based on the agrarian philosophy. They believed that the farmer needed a market for his products and should develop it through the resources that were there.

Public Policy and Resource Conservation

The whole problem, as I see it, to meeting the present challenge of resource conservation does not involve turning aside from an energy intensive agriculture. It involves, to a large degree, modifying the most intensive uses of energy, making better, more intelligent use of them. But it also involves a kind of land-use planning that we were talking about. I think that we have to appeal to the best that was in the agrarian tradition to provide the kind of support for intelligent planning for the protection of these resources, not only for the benefit of these untold generations we talk about, but for the benefit of the children and the children after them who are

going to inherit these farm estates, which are going to become more free from taxation if the various candidates for President are successful). That type of exemption in tax policies, designed to influence the use of a resource, is the whole history of our tax policy from the time we first decided to have a Constitution in 1781 because of the conflicts in tax policy about imports and trade within the colonies. The goals have been to influence economic growth and development and, as such, influence resource use.

What I think can be helpful about our understanding of the agrarian policy and agrarian tradition is to analyze the influences that it has had for both bad and good in American history, the influence that it has today, and to see how it can be translated to better educate the public about this great agrarian influence. Even though we have only 4 percent of the population directly engaged in agriculture, we have approximately a quarter, 25 percent, of it engaged in some facet of agribusiness. The overall influence of agriculture and agribusiness upon our economy is going to be a continuing major influence in the coming years. It'll be a major influence comparable to any aspect of industry and commerce in the decisions of our national government.

I think what's being done by the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology here at the University of Tennessee in developing this seminar is an example of what has to be done if we are going to meet our responsibilities to help bring all of our creative and innovative thinkers in this field to an awareness of the close relationship among all these policies.

The Future

I have oversimplified. I have talked primarily in generalities about the relationship of the agrarian tradition and the political economy. But, as

I said, I think that every aspect of conservation activity by the federal government and, with very minute exceptions, all major conservation activities that have achieved anything in this country in this past century have had their roots in action by the federal government or through incentives provided by the federal government. We need to explore these values and make some decisions about what is the most we've achieved with the agrarian philosophy and the agrarian tradition.

We recognize the need to utilize those influences which have made the most contribution to the kind of civilization we accept, with values that we want to preserve in terms of the political economy, in terms of fiscal economy, and in terms of moral precepts that inspire the most enduring values in all of us. We can then make decisions about how to best relate our energies and best show how the intelligence of agrarians today should serve in maintaining the quality of American land, in maintaining the efficiency of American agriculture, in maintaining our relationship to the values in government that influence all of our political economy, in maintaining the concept that there is and should be something of moral values in government--enduring moral values. This means that you don't allow someone to steal or abuse this valuable heritage of land any more than you allow them to steal or take your pocketbook. But also to be aware of the fact that because a tradition is agrarian in origin, doesn't necessarily make it holy.

Some of the worst abuses of every type of value--political and moral--have taken place in the agrarian economy in the past. If we went back to an animal energized farm economy, we would have to vastly expand the role of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, if nothing else. We can't go back. The ideas that I hope we gain out of the American tradition are those

values that promote peace, not only for our own individual soul, but for our national soul. Finally, I hope we can gain a respect for the need for preserving those values and resources that can sustain us.

AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE AGRARIAN MYTH

by

Clinton B. Allison*

The most interesting aspect of this symposium, in my view, is the parade of university professors and agricultural specialists, primarily ex-farm boys, who have extolled the virtues of rural life. I have an uncalled-for suspicion that many of them have worked diligently to escape the very environment they now praise, but I may be revealing only my own experience. To clarify my bias, I should tell you that above my desk I keep an aerial photograph of the family farm which my grandfather homesteaded and where I was born and raised. The homestead is past the one hundredth meridian and the 20-inch rainfall line in western Oklahoma, and could be, at least for outsiders, in strong competition for the ugliest place in the world. Since graduate school days I have kept the photograph before me as a reminder that, without energetic application to my work, I might stumble and find myself back in Custer County.

My responsibility is to look at the topic from the viewpoint of an educational historian, which is a useful perspective as it is easy to underestimate the importance of public schools in indoctrinating children with the agrarian tradition. Generations of children without direct rural experiences have, as a result of their schooling, embraced the agrarian tradition. However, the city dwellers' view of rural life and nature is better called the

---

*Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

agrarian myth rather than the agrarian tradition because it is an idealized view of the past.

Agrarian Myth

I should like to present an hypothesis, somewhat lacking in originality, to explain the development and persistence of the agrarian myth. The agrarian tradition or myth was developed by upper-middle class, urban social reformers in the nineteenth century, who were appalled by the habits, manners, morals, and vices of the lower classes in the growing cities of America, and it has been perpetuated by this same class ever since. The myth makers were often New Englanders living in the least agrarian part of the country who believed that with urbanization the society that they knew and were comfortable with was breaking down. They wanted to indoctrinate the poor slum dweller with a set of values that would give stability to the society and to protect their own interests. They were conservatives in that they looked to the past, the agrarian past, to preserve a world in which they had influence. And they were reformers in that they were searching for an ethic which would both lift the urban poor from their sin and squalor and, at the same time, restrain the money-grubbing, nouveau riche, for whom they had equal contempt, from the worst of their excesses. These conservative reformers may have also believed their own rhetoric about the agrarian past. They were, or they depended on, opinion makers (journalists, clergymen, and particularly, public school teachers and textbook writers) to inculcate the old agrarian values into the young.

Influence of the Textbook

The point may be exemplified by examining the content of nineteenth century elementary school textbooks. We should keep in mind that recitations from textbooks was the primary teaching method of the time, and, without mass media, had a much greater influence on the forming of the American mind than textbooks do today. Ruth Miller Elson's excellent study, Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century, provides both examples and insightful commentary on the role of schoolbooks in creating the agrarian myth. Elson summarizes that according to these textbooks, prosperity, independence, virtue, health, and happiness depended on living in the country. One thing that children in the nineteenth century could be sure of was that Uncle Sam was not a city dweller—he was a country boy. God intended us to be farmers because the farmer lives closest to nature. One textbook writer discussed metallic ores and asked his readers a question: "Why are all of these under the surface of the earth?" And then he provides the answer, "That they may not occupy our attention too much and prevent our cultivation of the soil." God put them there because he wanted us to be farmers. Throughout these nineteenth century books, occupations other than farming were regarded as unscrupulous. Lawyers were particularly bad, and even worse, of course, were lawyers who became politicians. The following little verse was reprinted in several textbooks:

> To fit up a village with tackle for tillage
> Jack Carter he took to the saw
> To pluck and to pillage, the same little village
> Tim Gordon he took to the law.

Concerns about wretched living conditions in city slums and, perhaps, fears about the development of an urban proletariat led textbook writers to contrast the healthy, outdoor life of farmers with "pale, thin and emaciated"

city dwellers—"the city for wealth, the country for health." Another little verse exemplifies the point:

> From Munster Vale they brought her,
> From the pure and balmy air,
> An Ormond peasant's daughter,
> With bright eyes and golden hair.
> They brought her to the city,
> And she faded slowly there.

In addition, the textbook writers insisted that farmers were particularly patriotic. George Washington, after all, was a farmer, and "the cultivator of the soil is indeed a patriot....The very trees and rocks among which he has grown up, are objects of his affection." The businessman on the other hand cannot be patriotic for he is devoted to money making. Speak of "love of country and he will think you mad. He has no country." Farmers who live on the land are loyal to it, and, in the view of the authors, our democratic society is dependent on them. Our future will be secure:

> Long as our hardy yeomanry command
> The rich fee simple of their native land.

The beginnings of the reform school movement in the United States exemplified the same attitudes on the part of upper-middle class educational reformers. Crime and juvenile delinquency were urban diseases, and their cure could not take place in the city because virtue was not possible there. In 1847 Massachusetts instituted the first reform school in the United States—the first compulsory educational institution in America. Characteristically, the founders wanted it out in the country where blue skies, green trees, and pure lakes could work their wonders on the baleful influence of the tenements. Michael Katz, the historian of this reform school, wrote that "exposure to the uplifting influence of the country became a key strategy to reform."

Searching for Values

In our present state of uncertainty, we seem to be attracted anew to nostalgia for a more simple, natural rural existence, although some, who have tried it, have discovered the truth in the graffiti--nostalgia isn't what it used to be. The danger, or so it seems to me, is that if we present too rosy a view of the past and past values, it may misdirect us from a search for more practical values in an industrialized, urbanized, technologized environment. Perhaps we ought to be searching for the values that we need to live in the sort of world that we have rather than to suffer from a continuing dose of overnostalgia.

AGRARIANISM AND FARM ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

by

Frank O. Leuthold*

Farmers throughout the history of America have expressed their values through their deeds, rhetoric, farm organizations and protests. Repeatedly they have spoken loud and clear. The quotations below on farmer actions on two widely different occasions indicate some similarity of goals and beliefs.

> ...From the North, South, East, and West the Grangers came, on horseback and in every conceivable style of vehicle. Several miles from the grove chosen for the celebration, at the intersection of the various roads, the organizations from different parts of the county met and formed in line. The delegation from the West consisted of two hundred and thirty wagons filled with merry-hearted youths and gray-haired veterans, of Tipton County, and seventy-five wagons brought the delegations from the North. All preliminaries being perfected, the line of march was taken up, headed by the Cicero band, seated in a wagon gaily decorated with flags, banners, and various devices. Then came the Grange Lodges, according to number....The banner of the Centre Grange had the following inscription: 'Corn must go up--monopolies must come down.'

> They were big, furrow-faced men with red cheeks and tanned necks, and they had come from all over southwestern Iowa, bumping over the corrugated macadam and dusty gravel roads in autos (medium-priced, two years old), pickup trucks, and fork-wheeled tractors. They were farmers. Since 1947, they had watched the price of everything they produced drop approximately 30 percent, while the price of everything they bought kept rising. Since 1954, they had watched the sun shrivel their corn. They were men with a grievance.

The first quotation is from Carl Taylor's book, The Farmers' Movement 1620-1920 (1953, pp. 2-3), on a report of a Granger meeting in 1873 when strong farmer protests against the railroad monopoly and poor farm prices were made in the western middle west. The second quotation is from an article in

---

*Professor of Rural Sociology, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Newsweek magazine (October 3, 1955) on a meeting in Iowa in fall, 1955, of the six-week old National Farmers Organization. These accounts are illustrative of the many farmer protests through farm organizations which have occurred throughout our history. Taylor (1953, p. 1) stated:

> ...Notwithstanding this fact, there have been few decades during the last three hundred years in which American farmers in one or more broad areas of the country have not felt impelled to make stern protests against the economic and social conditions under which they lived and worked. They have at times manifested their discontent in crowds and even mobs, at times in organized political parties, and at times in violent revolts. These protests have all been part of a farmers' movement which consists of more than a series of 'green uprisings.'

These protests have most often occurred when the farm situation declined rapidly. Carl Taylor (1953, p. 2) stated:

> ...The Farmers' Movement evolved out of and still revolves around the issues of prices, markets, and credits. It is as old as commercial agriculture in the United States...

The dominant theme of this conference is on agrarian or farmer values. Farm organizations throughout the years have frequently given expression to these values. Sociologists classify social structure into four main components or levels. These units of social structures, according to Parsons (1961), are: 1) value (or goal) level; 2) normative level; 3) collectivity or subgroup level; and 4) role level. The most universal and abstract level of social structure is the value or goal level. Also, the most unchanging level of social structure is the value level which means we can properly speak about American society of 1776, 1876 and 1976 and still speak of the same society. When we speak of our "heritage," we clearly make reference to the values and goals which have persisted in spite of complete changes of individuals and groups within our society and vast changes in the knowledge and technological aspects of culture.

Wayne Rohrer (1970) in an article in Rural Sociology listed three basic propositions of American agrarianism which have persisted from the time of Thomas Jefferson to the present day. These propositions are: 1) the farmer is independent; 2) that agriculture is the basic industry; and 3) that farming offers a natural and good life. Farm leaders have often expressed strong agrarian beliefs. However, on occasion some agricultural spokesmen have stated farmers should not be misled. For instance, Dudley W. Adams, the second master of the National Grange from 1873-75, warned that farmers should be wary of the praise of nonfarmers of the virtues of farmers. Adams (McCabe, 1873, p. 520) stated:

> ...Lawyers and doctors in beautiful colors paint the nobleness and independence of the farmer's life. They tell us we are the most intelligent, moral, healthy, and industrious class in all the land, and all our present is calm and our future happy. Merchants tell us that no business is so sure and free from care as farming, and that in no other calling do so few men end in bankruptcy. Politicians laud in stentorian tones the 'honest yeomanry,' 'the sinew of the land,' the 'bulwarks of our nation's liberties,' 'the coarse blouse of homespun which covers the true and honest heart,' and deluges more of equally fulsome and nauseating stuff.

Wayne Rohrer (1970) stated that agrarianism persists in America and has nonfarm as well as farm implications; he also indicated that four factors which have occurred since World War II have curtailed the impact of agrarian beliefs. These are: 1) the rapid decline in farm population (which was 30 million in 1940 but is less than 10 million today); 2) widespread vertical integration of agricultural production; 3) broadening concepts of agriculture to include agribusiness; and 4) reapportionment of legislative bodies.

Luther Tweeten (1970) in his book, Foundations of Farm Policy, indicated the long background of our farm value system. Tweeten (1970, p. 4) stated:

...The farm value structure has deep roots. First there is the Judeo-Christian culture of the Western world, which places emphasis on learning and active mastery of the world, in contrast to the more contemplative, ascetic culture of the Eastern world. There is the Reformation, which emphasized the individuality and secular worth of all men and which stimulated the emergence of the Protestant Ethic. There is English democracy, with roots in Greek antiquity, the Magna Carta, and the Reformation. There is capitalism, with its vigor strengthened by the English stability and institutional structure and the Industrial Revolution.

Then there is laissez faire. It has its origins in the philosophy of John Locke, which emphasized that the ideal world lies in the natural order of no collective restraints on individual actions, and in the utilitarian philosophy of Adam Smith, whereby economic man because of his acquisitive instinct is led to Utopia by the invisible hand of the perfect market. There is the eighteenth-century Englightenment philosophy, which in England emphasized reason, science, empiricism, and individualism and in France supported the view that the government could assume a significant role as servant of an equalitarian democracy. There is the French Physiocratic influence, which emphasized the primacy of agriculture in the total economy.

These influences were felt in the United States and become conspicuous in the moral philosophies of Puritanism and Jeffersonianism. Jefferson stressed the moral values of an atomistic, independent ownership pattern for agriculture and of a limited government role...

Grant McConnell (1953) in his book, The Decline of Agrarian Democracy, felt that agrarianism shifted at the turn of this century from one of being democratic in character when farmers were still in the majority to one based on power of farm organization. He pointed out the decline of populism expressed in the Granger and Farmers' Alliance movements. McConnell (1953, p. 1) stated:

In the first five decades of the twentieth century, the quality of agrarianism has been transformed. The monumental fact of the period is the rise of a structure of political power based on farm organization that extends from thousands of localities through every level of government to the highest councils of the nation. This structure not only represents a repudiation of the traditional agrarian distrust of power, but in its development has been the direct cause of some of the most disturbing passages in American politics.

The reason for the change was stated by McConnell (1953, p. 2):

> The answers are at once less simple and more concrete. They lie in the nature of the organizations out of which power in rural life has emerged. No single body comprehends the whole of the structure. One of the essential parts is the system of agricultural education that has been growing since the latter part of the nineteenth century. Another is the United States Department of Agriculture. Most important of all, however, is the great farm organization of modern times, the American Farm Bureau Federation.

The universalistic aspects of values such as agrarianism and agricultural fundamentalism are neither situation-specific or function-specific. Farm organizations express their values, I believe, through goals and objectives which are more situation and function-specific.

A major difficulty in analysis of goals is that goals statements vary greatly in specificity for an organization at any point in time, between organizations and through time for an organization or organizations. I feel somewhat tempted to state that any discussion of changing rural or farmer values and goals is just rhetoric. However, that is not entirely true. Any analysis is difficult because goals vary in specificity. I would like to distinguish four levels of goal specificity by citing various goals of farm organizations. The first level or most general level of goals includes statements on maintaining personal freedom, individualism, equity and equality. In fact, these are, I believe, the major goals of farmers and farmer spokesmen in farm organizations. At a second level of specificity are goals such as preservation of the family farm, limiting monopolistic power of nonfarm sectors, return to a free agricultural market structure, and increase farmer bargaining power. A third level of goal specificity is indicated by such goals as securing 100 percent parity price, increasing agricultural trade with all nations including the centrally planned economies, removal of crop acreage production quotas, and keeping the U. S. out of the war (which, in fact,

occurred in the years immediately preceding World War II by all three farm organizations). A fourth level of goal specificity is indicated by positions taken by farm organizations on particular actions of the government or other agencies and other objectives such as of increasing farmer membership. I have pointed out these examples in order to state that analysis of values and goals of farm organizations is not easy.

Variations in Goals of Farm Organizations

When Carl Taylor (1953) stated there has been only one American farmers' movement, he articulated the belief that the goals of various farmer protests and farm organization were the same. Taylor (1953, p. 500) stated:

> ...These ideologies and sentiments did not arise anew with each farmer upheaval; they have been in existence in all of the periods between episodes and are still in existence. They are the norms of the current powerful farmer public, which is sustained by farmers' organizations, farmer pressure groups, farm journalists, columnists and editors, congressmen and senators from rural areas, and government programs. All of these are still attempting to resolve the same issues with which the farmers of America have wrestled as they have become increasingly conscious of their increasing involvement in the commercial economy of modern society.

Taylor clearly felt that seeking "equity" in the marketplace, particularly, was the major goal of farm organizations. While I do not reject the notion of continual efforts of farmers and farm organizations to seek equity, I feel that farm organizations have placed varying amounts of emphasis on this goal and also have attempted various methods of reaching this goal.

In my opinion, the four major goals listed as the most general can be divided between two sets. Personal freedom and individualism are in one set and equity and equality are in the other set. All four farm organizations today accept these goals. Nevertheless they vary from one another in amount of rhetoric and efforts in seeking these goals. Also, the American Farm

Bureau Federation and National Farmers' Union have switched positions in stressing these sets of goals in the past 40 years. The position taken on the role of the Federal Government in agricultural production and marketing activities is the key to studying this switch, although I admit that some persons may disagree on the selection of this criterion. John A. Crampton (1965, pp. 46-47) indicated this switch for the National Farmers' Union:

> A second and perhaps more important change is in the Union's attitude toward governmental functions. The early Union proclaimed that 'We are opposed to all subsidies in general' and that 'the law that governs least governs best.' The 1922 convention deplored the 'rapid development of the bureaucratic features of the federal and state government,' increasing centralization, the federal assumption of power 'rightfully and often specifically reserved to and inherent in the people,' and the 'insidious bribery of the citizenry of the various states' through 'cunningly contrived' grants in aid offering people 'their own tax-raised dollars' in one hand and taking away 'liberty, initiative, and the fundamental rights of self-determination and self-government with the other.' In the thirties, when the Farmers Union was split into two factions, the 'radicals' objected to the New Deal farm programs partly on least-government grounds, while the 'moderates' favored them only temperately, believing that the ultimate solution was in the cooperative movement through which farmers helped themselves.
>
> Today the Farmers Union is the most vocal farm organization in support of federal aid to agriculture, although a nostalgic glance at the older ideal is sometimes evident, as in the admiration for the TVA's decentralizing features. Expanded federal power no longer alarms the Union.

The position of the American Farm Bureau Federation on the role of the Federal Government in agriculture switched, but in the opposite direction. The switch occurred, but not without some disagreement between farmers in the two major agricultural regions. Christiana McFadyen Campbell (1961, p. 188) in her book, The Farm Bureau and the New Deal, stated:

> A review of the actual policies favored by the Farm Bureau during the New Deal period indicates that the basic type of economic policy in which the A.F.B.F. was interested was price policy. While O'Neal was eager to have the advice of expert economists, his own concept of the aim of price policy was not formulated in terms of sophisticated economic theory. It was simply to raise the price of farm products. This he felt to be morally just, since farm prices had

been depressed lower and longer than had other prices or wages. He was not the originator, but he became a leading apostle of parity as the yardstick by which the level of farm product prices was to be measured—the goal being to restore and maintain the relationship between farm prices and other prices that had existed in the golden age of agriculture, 1909-14.

During the early days of the New Deal, Midwestern Farm Bureau members were as eager as the Southern members to see the disastrously low farm prices raised through action by the federal government. By 1940, with farm prices considerably higher but with parity still not achieved, Southern Farm Bureau leaders wished to press on for parity. Midwesterners, however, were beginning to question the wisdom of such a policy, since it was well understood that governmental support of prices inevitably was accompanied by governmental controls, and the greater the support, probably the greater the control. A threatened split between the Southern and the Midwestern farm bureaus over the issue of the level of price supports was averted in 1940 by a compromise resolution, adopted at the annual general meeting of the A.F.B.F., according to the terms of which 85 percent of parity was endorsed as the desirable level.

William Berger (1971, pp. 107-108) in his book, Dollar Harvest: The Story of the Farm Bureau, also stated this shift in emphasis of the Farm Bureau policy:

The 1948 convention in Atlantic City proved to be a turning point in Farm Bureau history. Although the organization had been edging away from support of the government's general farm program for some time, after strenuous debate a clean break was made. This decision caused a rupture in the Farm Bureau's relations with other farm groups which has not healed to this day. It also marked the beginning of the Farm Bureau's continuing crusade to purge the federal government from agriculture, to return the farm economy to the 'free market.'

In 1954 the Benson-Farm Bureau alliance succeeded in dumping high, rigid price supports for the Farm Bureau-favored flexible ones, to sink as low as 60 percent of parity. The general argument put forth during the 1950s for the Benson-Farm Bureau campaign to sharply curtail acreage controls and price supports went as follows: All the major difficulties in agriculture can be traced to government intervention. High fixed price supports encourage unmanageable surpluses, price our goods out of the foreign market, and keep the farmers from adjusting to market demands. If government restrictions on production were eliminated, farmers would adjust their output to meet the needs of the marketplace.

I would add that William Berger and the Farm Bureau are not the best of friends. Berger was an aide to the late Congressman Joe Resnick who launched

largely a one-man congressional investigation into Farm Bureau business activities in the 1960's.

The American Farm Bureau Federation places great emphasis on individualism and personal freedom. The Farm Bureau News (January 19, 1976, p. 11) gives the purpose and philosophy of the Farm Bureau as it was adopted by their National Convention in 1976:

Purpose of Farm Bureau

Farm Bureau is a free, independent, nongovernmental, voluntary organization of farm and ranch families united for the purpose of analyzing their problems and formulating action to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement and, thereby, to promote the national well-being. Farm Bureau is local, statewide, national, and international in its scope and influence and is nonpartisan, nonsectarian, and nonsecret in character.

Farm Bureau Beliefs and Philosophy

America's unparalleled progress is based on freedom and dignity of the individual, sustained by basic moral and religious concepts.

Freedom of the individual versus concentration of power which would destroy freedom is the central issue in all societies.

Economic progress, cultural advancement, and ethical and religious principles flourish best where men are free, responsible individuals.

The exercise of free will, rather than force, is consistent with the maintenance of liberty.

Individual freedom and opportunity must not be sacrificed in a quest for guaranteed 'security'..."

The ideology of the Farmers's Union is expressed by John Crampton (1965, p. 7):

There are many strands in the Union's traditional ideology. At the center are four rural attidudes: the sense of disadvantage, pacifism, cooperativism, and the family farm ideal. These attitudes are not exclusively rural, but they are recognizably more rural than urban. There are opposing rural attitudes; but these are the ones the Union has appropriated as its own. Changes are made at the edges of the Union's ideology; for example, the Union has modified its earlier moralism, laissez faire-ism, and racialism. But the core stands.

The National Farmers Organization, while it shifted approaches in the procedures to follow to obtain its primary goal of equity of farm prices, has been consistent in their belief that the Federal Government cannot assist farmers a great deal by "price support" and "production controls." They believe strongly that farmers must voluntarily band together to bargain collectively in a similar manner as do many nonagricultural sectors in our economy. They value the freedom or rights of farmers to pool production in order to obtain higher and more equitable prices. They also clearly endorse the goal of the preservation of the family farm as do the other three farm organizations, particularly, the Farmers' Union. In NFO propaganda there is scant mention of individualism, personal freedom and independence which is in sharp contrast to propaganda of the Farm Bureau Federation. The NFO agrees to some extent with the Farm Bureau on the role of Federal Government. NFO president, Oren Lee Staley, in a recent comment in the NFO Reporter (May, 1976, p. 4) stated:

> Anyone who has the idea that some government program is going to save farmers had better forget it and dedicate all the time he can spare to enrolling neighbors in the NFO Collective Bargaining program, the one way farmers can save themselves.

The National Grange has expressed goals in the middle of other farm organizations during the past 50 years, although in recent years it has sided with the positions of the Farmers' Union and NFO more frequently than the Farm Bureau. The National Grange's objectives and goals are partly indicated by W. L. Robinson (1966, p. 15) in his book, The Grange 1867-1967: The First Century of Service and Evolution:

> 1. We recognize the importance of preserving and protecting the integrity of the owner-operator-manager farm, as a guarantee to the Nation of the efficient and abundant production of high-quality food and fiber at reasonable prices for the domestic and world markets.
>
> 2. We seek to obtain for American farmers a return for their labor, management, risk and investment which bears a reasonable rela-

tionship to that received for these same economic factors in any other segment of our economy, as well as adequate compensation for their contribution to the general welfare.

3. We must develop and activate commodity programs which will give agricultural producers and workers maximum opportunities to freely exercise managerial ability and competitive advantage in cooperation with programs authorized and administered by Government, where necessary, which would operate within the framework of 'freedom under law.'

4. We must seek to achieve equitable income by placing major reliance upon the primary domestic market and, at the same time, maintain the influence and effect of competition and efficient production upon secondary markets; providing freedom of competition in world markets, within our treaty commitments and international responsibility.

A central question is, do our farm organizations differ in goals and, thus, values held? All believe in the preservation of the family farm. All believe that American farmers should be allowed to produce for the world-wide market including trade with the centrally planned economies. All believe the farmer has the basic right to determine his own farm production, although the Farmers' Union would accept some controls in order to assure equity. All believe that farmers are "equal" to nonfarmers and that farming is a good vocation that must be protected. All believe in voluntary cooperation in farmers pooling their farm production, although the NFO pushes this position much more vigorously than the other farm organizations. All believe in cooperative buying and selling. Increasingly, all believe that the Federal Government's role in agriculture should not interfere with farmers seeking a fair and equitable price. Without doubt the Farmers' Union and NFO place relatively greater emphasis in obtaining equity in the marketplace, while the Farm Bureau places greater emphasis on the preservation of personal freedom without interference of government. The National Grange gives a more balanced position in the obtaining of equity and the maintenance of personal freedom.

So far I have not clearly specified what is equity and what is freedom. While equity can be defined in varying fashions, it is associated with prices farmers receive and pay in the marketplaces. Thus, I suppose equity and economic equality can be translated into dollar and cents and into a formula. However no economic yardstick is available for assessing personal freedom. But yet this is critical in understanding farmers' goals and actions. Harold Breimyer (1965) in his book, Individual Freedom and Economic Organization of Agriculture, discussed the many meanings and aspects of freedom. Breimyer (1965, pp. 35-36) stated:

> The doctrine of individual freedom is sometimes invoked so casually or superficially in connection with a particular proposal for farm policy as to be a travesty on its vital meaning. The real interest frequently is not freedom but favoritism. And yet, as stated repeatedly in foregoing pages, each proposal for farm policy and each trend in farm affairs ought to be examined thoughtfully in terms of its meaning for social and political values--for individual freedom. For it matters how the working of the agricultural economy--with or without cooperative action, under government programs or outside them, in fulfillment of contract or in market sale--in each case it matters what the effect is on the individual. It matters to the individual farmer, to the individual marketer, to the individual consumer.

I cannot end the discussion on a better note, so I will not try.

Thank you.

Appendix

Major Factors Characterizing Successful Farm Organizations

In the present section 10 key factors felt to characterize the more widespread and successful organizations in the United States are delineated. The 10 factors felt to characterize the better known and established farm organizations are, first, outlined and, second, discussed in more detail. The 10 factors are not presented, however, as being either totally inclusive or mutually exclusive of all significant factors. They are, rather, what are felt to be some of the reoccurring items present in the better known farmer revolts, movements and organizations throughout United States' history. The factors have application in other parts of the world only if agriculture is developed beyond the subsistence stage to a viable market stage and occur in a society relatively free in allowing independent groups to form and to carry out effective programs without severe sanctions. In other words, for these factors to hold true the society must be relatively free or democratic and agriculture must be a clearly differentiated segment of the economy.

The 10 factors characterizing known and widespread farmer organizations are:

1. Overriding issues about which farmers have strong feelings, especially at the early stages of the development of the organization.
2. Tireless leaders and numerous volunteer workers, especially at early stages of development.
3. Paid organizers throughout life of the organization including the very early stages.

4. Vast quantities of printed propaganda in early stages and throughout life of the organization prepared by all levels of organization.
5. Opposition groups and agencies, particularly in early stages of development to focus attention on the movement.
6. Strong local (county) organizational units.
7. Flexibility of objectives, organizational structure and area of membership.
8. Notable accomplishments or successes in reaching stated goals throughout lifetime of the organization. The first accomplishment must be a large growing membership and recognition as a legitimate representative of farmer interests.
9. Development of a business or business enterprises which will maintain membership.
10. Avoidance of partisan political alignment.

1. The first and undoubtedly the most important factor characterizing the initiation of a farm organization is overriding issues about which farmers have strong feelings. As Carl Taylor stated, nearly without exceptions these issues have been economic ones pertaining to prices of important cash crops, cost of key farm items of production, credit and marketing difficulties. Rapidly changing economic conditions have often served as a necessary although not sufficient condition for the initiation of farm organizations. However, this factor is seldom sufficient in itself for securing stable growth and development. New farm organizations occur quite frequently while successful ones occur quite rarely. For instance, six farm organizations were known to have been organized in 1955 in the same year the National Farmers' Organization originated, although none exist today. Most new farm organizations never meet with much success in terms of a large stable membership.

The Grange is a prime example of a farm organization with rapid growth and development resulting from stressing poor economic conditions. The Grange was started in 1867 and developed slowly when social and fraternal goals were stressed. However, from 1872 to 1875 when attention was focused upon the abuses of middlemen, the railroad monopoly and other monopolies, the Grange grew quite rapidly. The Grange fought the agencies they felt were responsible for poor farm conditions. At that time many Grange businesses were formed and powerful legislative lobbies were developed, especially at the state level. The rapid growth of farm organizations occurs generally when economic issues are emphasized. Shays' Rebellion (1785-87), the Whiskey Rebellion (1791-94), the Kentucky Night Riders (1908), the Farmers' Holiday Association (1933) and the National Farmers' Organization (1955) are primary examples where poor and declining economic conditions constituted the primary "necessary condition" for initiation of action. In addition, the surge in growth of such widespread organizations as the Southern Farmers' Alliance (1880's), the American Society of Equity (1902), the Farmers' Union (1902), and even the American Farm Bureau Federation (1920) came in periods when overriding economic conditions facing farmers of their day were given major focus.

2. The second factor characterizing successful farm organizations is that tireless leaders and numerous unpaid workers are nearly always present. This is true in the early stages of development and sometimes at latter stages of development. However, they are more crucial for early development. The countless days and years of efforts of dedicated national leadership and key local leaders cannot be overemphasized as a factor in success of a farm organization. It has been essential to all widespread farm organizations. As a general principle, paid and unpaid recruiters for most widespread farm

organizations have given untiringly of their efforts because anything less than full efforts would have met a quick end of local organizations.

The Grange, Farmer Alliance, American Society of Equity, Farmers' Union, Farmers' Holiday Association, Farm Bureau and National Farmers' Organization all have their well known dedicated and charismatic leaders as well as numerous, but largely unknown tireless workers. Not all charismatic founders of farm organizations are successful, however, in maintaining leadership positions. Some, such as the founder of the NFO, Jay Lowry, who was fired shortly after the organization had its start, and J. A. Everitt of the American Society of Equity who was voted out of office, failed to maintain their positions.

3. The third factor characterizing widespread farm organizations is that of heavy reliance on paid organizers for recruiting and maintaining membership. This is not a recent practice either. For example, the Grange used paid organizers in the early 1870's in securing its phenominal membership growth. The same was true for the NFO. Paid organizers have extensively been used by farm organizations after they have become well established. For instance, the Farm Bureau maintains "organizational directors" in many counties in order to increase and maintain membership. The Farm Bureau's first paid organizers were Extension agents who organized local farm bureaus.

Organizational work is largely a full-time job. Paid organizers also constitute very central leaders in the early stages of development of a new organization; thus, they are also responsible for development of policy. Farm organizations in initial stages have relied mainly on the selection of paid organizers from their own membership to secure proper dedication. However, after an organization has been fairly well established the criteria for selection changes and persons outside the organization are generally hired. The

Farm Bureau is a leading example which hires nonfarmers as organizers. However, the NFO is an example where recruitment of loyal organizers was mainly based on selection from within their membership for many years. In fact, this procedure served as a major NFO propaganda tactic to counter the argument that the NFO was just another "me too" farm organization.

Paid organizers, while present in all continuing and widespread farm organizations, sometimes operate from different levels in the organizational structure. For example, NFO organizers operate as a part of the national level organization while Farm Bureau organizers operate essentially as part of the state and county organizational units. However, in neither organization could membership be sufficiently maintained if paid organizers were not used.

4. The fourth factor characterizing successful farm organizations is the vast quantities of printed propaganda generated by the organization. This is true in both the initial stages of development and throughout the life of the organization. In fact, creation of propaganda material is a key organizational task at all stages of development. Also, the job is done under close supervision of the top leadership. The official "house organ" of the NFO was published within a few months of the initial NFO meeting. All present farm organizations have official house organs. The Farm Bureau leads all farm organizations in the dissemination of in-house publications. Frequent publication is essential even though the stated goals and objectives from new farm organizations seldom express really new ideas. While general farm magazines and newspapers have covered the activities of farm organizations since the days of the early Grange and Farmers' Alliance, coverage greatly decreases in periods when the pressing issues subside. Therefore, farm organizations have depended primarily upon their own propaganda media for adequate and continuous coverage of their activities.

5. A fifth factor characterizing farm organizations is the presence in most instances of opposition groups or agencies, even other farm organizations. While new farm organizations generally state quite similar goals and objectives of other farm organizations, most new farm organizations have had opposition to methods used in addressing solutions. In fact, some farmer organizations have intentionally created an opposition to focus attention upon their activities. For example, farmers in Shays' Rebellion boycotted businesses as have farmers throughout later periods in the Southern Farmers' Alliance, the Grange, the Farmers' Holiday Association, the Farmers' Union and the NFO.

While at a first glance the presence of opposition would seemingly be harmful, analysis indicates that opposition may be essential or necessary to fully develop a "reason for being" for new farm organizations. Just as there are overriding issues for justifying a new organization, there must be specific individuals, agencies, and farm organizations to attack and disagree.

6. The sixth factor characterizing widespread and continuous farm organizations is development of strong local (county) organizational units. The presence of strong local level of organization has been present in all successful farm movements, both at the early stages and later stages of development. Many new farm organizations have failed because of weak local organizational units. While many farm organizations also have had strong national organizational units, there have been some notable exceptions such as the early Grange, the Farmers' Alliance and the Farm Bureau prior to the organization of the American Farm Bureau Federation. Continuance of a widespread farmer organization over an extended period, however, requires both strong local units and strong national leadership. While some farm organizations have developed strong state level organizational units, this level is less essential than the other two. For example, the NFO has fairly successfully

operated without a functioning intermediate state level of organization. In some cases, strong intermediate levels of organization may lead to a demise of the farm organization, such as was partially the case for the Farmer Alliance and early Grange. The Farmers' Union has suffered because of strong and independent state organizations.

The Farmers' Holiday Association is a prime example of a very large membership organization that disappeared within a short period after it was initiated because a strong local organizational structure had not been properly developed. The same thing nearly occurred for the NFO when membership went from 189 thousand in 1956 after only one year, to around an estimated 20 thousand in 1957. The NFO grew steadily after 1958 after substantial effort went into building strong county units by paid organizers.

7. The seventh factor characterizing widespread farm organizations is flexibility of objectives, organizational structure, and area of membership. All four of the present farm organizations have greatly altered one or more of these items throughout their development. The NFO changed from a protest and legislative group requesting Federal Government action to one of "collective bargaining" after legislative efforts failed. The NFO again made major adustments in its program of collective bargaining to one of pooling production or cooperative selling. The Farmers' Union shifted area of membership from the South to the Prairie states where farmers were more receptive to cooperative marketing. All four organizations have also altered their positions on federal legislation. Most notable here has been the switch of the Farm Bureau from liberal stands on social and farm legislation in the 1920's and 1930's to conservative stands to accommodate feelings of members in certain regions.

The early Grange of earlier decades passed out of existence in the Midwest because of its numerous failures in local cooperative business in the 1870's. It survived, but only by a shift in membership to the Northeast and a retreat to a fraternal type organization. The American Society of Equity and Farmers' Holiday Association are key examples of farm organizations that failed to alter their main objectives and organizational structure; both passed out of existence, one slowly and one quite rapidly. The American Society of Equity did shift area of membership from the eastern to the western part of the Midwest, but regional debates on changing objectives were never resolved.

8. The eighth factor characterizing successful and continuous farm organizations is notable accomplishments or successes in reaching stated objectives. Goals are scaled in a certain order and what are notable successes early in the development as farm organizations are different in later stages. For instance, a large and rapidly growing membership and acceptance as a legitimate representative of farmer interests are essential successes in early development. However, in later stages, accomplishments must be made on the manifest objectives of the organization. The Grange, for instance, grew quite rapidly from 1872 to 1875, but its failure in securing legislation and failure in operation of business enterprises led to its rapid decline. The NFO after its switch to collective marketing objectives was successful in making minor disruptions in the marketing of some farm products. While in early stages of NFO regrowth, these were legitimate accomplishments for its leaders and members. However, they were not sufficient ones after membership was widespread and had reached peak levels in several Midwestern states. The failure of the NFO to obtain major marketing contracts with processors resulted in a sharp change in the organization.

The factor of notable accomplishments and the factor of flexibility of goals and objectives are highly interrelated. Farm organizations that fail to reach their stated original objectives are nearly as numerous as the number of farm organizations. For example, Shays' Rebellion, Whiskey Rebellion, Farmers' Alliance, Grange, Kentucky Night Riders, American Society of Equity, Farmers' Holiday Association, Farmers' Union, American Farm Bureau Federation and NFO failed to reach their primary initial objectives. Those still in existence altered their objectives, organizational structure, or area of membership in order to continue, while many of those not in existence failed to alter these items sufficiently.

9. The ninth factor characterizing successful farm organizations is to develop a business or business enterprises which will maintain membership. These business enterprises should not be dependent upon "ups" and "downs" in the commodity market. Thus, insurance business and supply and marketing cooperatives continue in good times and bad. The Farm Bureau is the prime example of following this procedure to build and maintain membership. The Farmers' Union, and to a lesser extent the Grange, has also entered business endeavors. The NFO has also switched to largely cooperative pooling of grain and livestock in order to continue to seek their goal of collective bargaining in order to secure parity price.

10. The tenth factor characterizing successful farm organizations is to avoid partisan political alignments. The Grange, Farmers' Alliance, and Nonpartisan League are examples where entrance into active politics can lead to a demise of a farm organization. The latter two organizations passed out of existence even though they had great initial success. Also, some of the "ups" and "downs" in farm organizations can be traced to "too close" partisan political behavior on the part of farm organizations.

Brief History of Present and Past U. S. Farm Organizations

Four General Farm Organizations in the U. S. Today

1. The National Grange (Patrons of Husbandry) was formed in 1867 as a fraternal organization for farmers by Oliver Kelley, a USDA employee and a native of Minnesota. William Saunders, the first Master of the Grange, and Kelley were employees of the Department of Agriculture. The Grange grew very slowly until 1872. The Grange grew rapidly afterwards and reached a peak of 850 thousand individual members in 1875. However, it declined substantially afterwards reaching its low point in membership in 1885.

While Oliver Kelley formed the first Grange in Washington, D. C., the Granger movement started only after Kelley returned home to Minnesota and initiated several Subordinate Granges. In 1873 the leading state was Iowa with over 1,800 Subordinate Granges. The other leading states in 1873 in number of Subordinate Granges, respectively, were Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, Indiana, Mississippi, Minnesota, Nebraska, Georgia, Wisconsin, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Ohio.

In the middle 1870's, State Granges led the fight for farmers' economic interests. Their chief targets were monopolies, middlemen and railroads. Numerous Grange stores and businesses were established in the 1870's. However, efforts in politics and businesses often met with failure although several states passed legislation to help regulate railroads. Unlimited financial liability of Grange members and officers made the Grange very unpopular when Grange businesses failed. After these unfortunate business adventures, the Grange switched back to its emphasis on social and fraternal events. Grange membership increasingly became concentrated in the Northeast from 1890. The South, particularly, lost nearly all its membership after the peak 1875 period.

National Grange Membership Based on Adjustment from Individual to Family Membership from 1875 for the Four Regions of the U. S.*

	Year							
	1875	1880	1890	1910	1930	1950	1960	1970
	thousand							
Midwest	206	30	20	46	68	111	122**	
South	138	11	4	1	3	11	11	
West	15	5	5	12	32	82	76	
Northeast	40	19	42	165	210	238	185	
Total	451	65	71	223	316	443	394	

*Source: Tontz (1964). Individual Grange membership was adjusted by Tontz on a basis of 1.9 members per family.

**Ohio had 88 thousand of these estimated family members.

In later years, the Grange has successfully entered the insurance business as have the Farm Bureau and Farmers' Union. The National Grange has been an active lobby in Washington and has taken a moderate to conservative stand on national farm and social issues. In recent years, however, its stands have been less conservative than the American Farm Bureau Federation as the latter organization has shifted their position further and further to the "right." The influence of the Grange as a political lobbyist organization is less than either the Farmers' Union or the Farm Bureau due probably to the fact it takes a moderate position between that of other farm organizations and because regions of organizational strength, Northeast and far West, are outside the major agricultural regions of the Midwest and South.

The National Grange has had several long-term and influential masters such as Louis Taber (1923-41) and Herschel Newsom (1950-73). The leading Grange states, at the present time, are Ohio, New York and Pennsylvania.

New England states and the Western states of Washington, Oregon and California have large Grange memberships.

2. The National Farmers' Union (National Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union of America) was formed in Texas in 1902 by Newton Gresham. It claimed 200 thousand members throughout the South by 1905. It declined somewhat afterward until it shifted its dominant area membership to the "prairie" states. The Farmers' Union was a secret type organization during its early years. C. S. Barrett of Georgia, national president from 1906 to 1928, took over leadership from founder Newton Gresham after his death. The goal of the Farmers' Union was to always seek equity, and it accomplished this largely through cooperative marketing, first with cotton and then with wheat. Later during the 1940's and 1950's it sought parity of price through Federal Government programs.

Presently the Farmers' Union is a leading farm marketing cooperative and lobbyist to secure Federal Government help. It also owns many other businesses, such as a fertilizer plant and insurance company. The Farmers' Union has strong state organizations, having a federation type organization that allows states to take independent stands on issues. In fact, many states have openly disagreed on positions. For the most part, the National Farmers' Union has taken a more "liberal" stand on farm and social legislation than other general farm organizations in the past 30 years. For instance, it favored strong government programs on "production controls" and "price supports" during the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's when the Farm Bureau wanted lower price supports.

The Farmers' Union and Grange helped the Farm Bureau in supporting the "Farm Bloc" in the 1920's to secure stronger government programs for agriculture. While the Farmers' Union has continued to back strong government

programs, the Farm Bureau moved away from support of such programs after World War II. The Farmers' Union backed the "Brannan Plan" while the Farm Bureau strongly opposed it. However, the establishment in 1920 of the "Farm Bloc" of farm organizations and legislators represented a major shift in the activities of farm organizations in forming strong and permanent lobbyist groups.

While the Farmers' Union was always critical of the Farm Bureau and Extension relationship, the real disagreement between these organizations, which continues to the present, occurred over the Farmers' Union support of the Farm Security Administration when the Farm Bureau vigorously attacked the agency until its program was ended.

James Patton, president from 1941-66, was a dominant farm leader as was C. S. Barrett of Georgia, 1906-28, who kept his position even though membership strength shifted to the Midwest. Tony Dechant followed Patton as president in 1966. There were 278 thousand family members in 1956 and membership is somewhat less at present.

National Farmers' Union Family Membership in Selected Years for the Four Regions of the U. S.*

Region	1908	1914	1918	1936**
	thousand			
Midwest	14	30	85	162
South	111	62	34	74
West	10	12	11	42
Northeast	0	0	0	1

*Source: Tontz (1964).

**Oklahoma with 46 thousand and Arkansas with 14 thousand members have most of the Southern membership. Wyoming with 18 thousand and Montana with 15 thousand members have the majority of the Western membership.

The leading membership states in 1956 were, respectively, Oklahoma, North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Nebraska, Arkansas and Wisconsin. The states of Iowa and Missouri had very low membership, however.

3. The American Farm Bureau Federation was formed in 1920 by the amalgamation of 12 state Farm Bureau organizations. The majority of the early members were located in Midwestern states (see table). The South had the fewest members of any region in the early stages. The American Farm Bureau Federation differed from most farm organizations in that it did not originate or develop as a protest against poor or declining farm conditions. In fact, farm prices were quite favorable when the first county farm bureaus were formed in the 1910's. The first farm bureaus were organized in the early 1910's when "farm agents" or "county agents" were hired to carry out agricultural education and Extension work. The county "farm bureau idea" spread rapidly and led to the "Smith-Lever Extension Act" in 1914 which established the Cooperative Extension Service throughout the entire U. S. There remained a close connection between the Farm Bureau and the Extension Service for many years with joint offices and close working relationships. Iowa and Illinois were the last states to break formal connections in 1954. The Grange and Farmers' Union complained about this close relationship claiming the Farm Bureau was being supported by government funds.

The American Farm Bureau Federation has had eight national presidents. Two of the most influential have been Edward O'Neal of Alabama and Charles Shuman of Illinois. Edward O'Neal, president from 1931 to 1947, led the Farm Bureau in moderate and sometimes liberal policies during his term of office. Under O'Neal the Farm Bureau asked for increased Federal Government action in agriculture and pushed for "parity" prices. With the election of Allen Kline

of Iowa in 1948 the policy shifted to one of less government interference. Charles Shuman of Illinois, president from 1954 to 1970, continued these policie as Allan Grant, who was elected this year to replace William Kuhfuss, will undoubtedly do. The American Farm Bureau Federation is presently the most "conservative" of the four major farm organizations.

The first two sentences of the Farm Bureau beliefs and philosophy adopted for 1976 are: "America's unparalleled progress is based on freedom and dignity of the individual, sustained by basic moral and religious concepts. Freedom of the individual versus concentration of power which would destroy freedom is the central issue in all societies."

The Farm Bureau opposes most Federal Government programs of "production control" and "price support." Overall, the Farm Bureau favors limited government action and desires a return to a "free market" system in agriculture and most aspects of the economy. Thus, the Farm Bureau presently opposes many of the ideas they pushed for in the 1920's and up through the 1940's.

Some of the major items of Federal Government policy are indicated in William Kuhfuss' address to the National Convention in January, 1976. Some of these items were:

1) Opposed legislation to put the Federal Government back into the business of owning stocks of agricultural commodities.

2) Opposed proposals to make the Commodity Credit Corporation the sales agency for all grain exports--a move toward state trading.

3) Opposed attempts to legislate export controls and embargoes on the sales of farm products.

4) Pointed out the danger of government-to-government agreements on grain exports.

5) Monitored changes in the pesticide law to provide for more input from agriculture and make EPA more responsive to the needs of farmers in producing food and fiber.

7) Discouraged attempts to involve the Federal Government in land-use planning.

8) Promoted reductions in federal spending as the only objective way to deal with inflation.

11) Promoted legislation to update federal estate taxes.

14) Opposed the common Situs Picketing Bill which would increase the power of organized labor in the construction industry.

Farm Bureau membership was over 300 thousand during the 1920's, but declined somewhat during the Depression as membership did in all farm organizations. By 1945, membership was just under one million. In 1965 membership was over one and one-half million and in 1975 it reached 2.5 million. Membership steadily shifted to the South which now has 52 percent of the total membership. In 1955 membership in the South represented one-third of the membership. Farm Bureau membership is lowest in the Northeast. In 1975 the leading Midwest states with over 100 thousand members each were Illinois, Indiana and Iowa. Southern states with over 100 thousand members were Kentucky, Texas, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi and North Carolina.

American Farm Bureau Federation Family Membership, 1920 to 1975, for the Four Regions of the U. S.

Region	Year						
	1920	1925	1935	1945	1955	1965	1975
	thousand						
Midwest	284	217	178	481	799	772	970
South	5	22	30	312	563	713	1,308
West	11	26	25	52	132	131	154
Northeast	17	50	48	140	123	63	73
Total	317	314	281	986	1,623	1,678	2,505

National headquarters are maintained in Chicago and Washington, D. C. The Farm Bureau claims to be highly democratic; the "resolution process" of securing members' opinions on topics is controlled closely by state and national leadership so that issues not favored are seldom voted upon at state and national conventions. State farm bureaus form powerful lobbyists in many states. The Farm Bureau has initiated many state and national cooperatives. Although these are separate legal corporations and cooperatives, there are very close connections and Farm Bureau leaders are often leaders in these cooperatives. The Farm Bureau has many county headquarters and maintains "organizational directors" in many counties. The Farm Bureau is the most open about its membership of any of the four general farm organizations.

4. The National Farmers's Organization (NFO) was started in August, 1955, by Jay Loghry, a Moorman's feed salesman, and Wayne Jackson, an Iowa farmer, to protest poor and rapidly declining farm conditions. With sharply declining farm prices and drought conditions in 1955 farmers were ready for some type of action. What occurred in 1955 was similar to earlier periods of protest in the western middle west. The NFO spread rapidly in Iowa, Missouri and surrounding states in the fall of 1955 and the spring of 1956. Petitions calling for "floors" on cattle and hog prices were made. In addition, it was suggested strongly by NFO spokesmen that Secretary of Agriculture Benson should be fired because it was felt that the government should provide high price supports which Benson opposed. Organizers were sent into many new areas and many counties formed NFO chapters. At the first National Convention in December, 1955, Oran Lee Staley, of Missouri, was elected president. To date he has been the only national president, although he has often been opposed at national conventions. Jay Loghry, the founder, had been fired by the NFO after two months because of his strong views on conducting a "farm strike" since this

was considered to be radical. Later the NFO returned to this general notion under the label collective bargaining.

The NFO officials went to Washington in 1956, but no action was taken by the Federal Government on their petitions. At this time the NFO ran into their arch opponent, the American Farm Bureau Federation, which was backing the "Soil Bank" program. Relationships have never been good between the Farm Bureau and NFO at any level of organization. However, there is a great deal of overlapping membership.

NFO membership reached a high of 189 thousand by July, 1956, but declined quite rapidly afterwards to probably 20 thousand or so members. The NFO had no real organizational structure and no positive legislative results were apparent from their early efforts. The Missouri membership was the only area of active membership left in the 1956-57 period. The newly formed farm organization almost passed out of existence like the Farmers' Holiday Association had some 20 years earlier.

NFO leaders in the 1957-58 period planned a sharp shift in organizational policy to one of "collective bargaining" in the marketing of farm products, particularly swine and cattle. The new policy was officially adopted in August, 1958. Five important steps in this change were:

1) Members would sign an agreement for a three-year period naming the NFO as the members' bargaining agent.
2) Master contracts would be presented to processors of all types of farm commodities that would name the NFO as their procurement agent. In return for this service the processor would agree to pay prices substantially higher than that of current market prices.

3) In order to obtain master contracts with processors, the NFO would conduct "holding actions" of selected farm products in order to force processors to bargain in good faith with the NFO.

4) To protect the early processors who signed contracts from paying higher prices, contracts would not be activated until 60 percent of a commodity was under contract. A grace period of 30 days was also made after notification so processors who had signed contracts could form a "marketing agent in common" in order to shift added costs.

5) The NFO would use paid organizers (all NFO members) to rebuild their membership.

Membership in the NFO again increased quite rapidly after 1959 with the use of paid organizers. While exact membership figures are secret, membership was estimated at 125 thousand in 1962 and 250 thousand in 1964 after the 1962 and 1964 holding actions helped to raise membership. Membership estimates were based on delegates to the National Convention in 1962 which showed that Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Kansas, Indiana, Ohio and South Dakota, respectively, had the largest number of members. In recent years declining membership has put the NFO in a bad financial position. In 1974 a large fund raising effort was conducted in which several millions of dollars were raised to save the NFO from bankruptcy.

In the September, 1974, NFO Reporter, a total of 17 states was listed as to the amount of money raised. These data provide a good indication of the location of NFO membership. The states listed in order of amount of money raised are Minnesota, Iowa, Ohio, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Missouri, Illinois, Montana, Indiana, North Dakota, Kentucky, Michigan, Kansas, California, Idaho and Maine, respectively.

Oran Lee Staley was elected in 1975 to a four-year term. Previously elections were for only a one-year term. Internal conflicts have occurred within the NFO during a great deal of its history. Many former NFO leaders and organizers have dropped out of the NFO. Staley won his four-year term by a vote of 2,353 to 1,575 over Del Paulson.

The NFO conducted three "test holding actions" on hogs from October, 1959, to April, 1961, with evidence of distress in the market system, particularly diversion of livestock from one market to another. In August, 1962, and August, 1964, "all-out holding actions" on livestock were held. These were the focus of nation-wide attention. The first action lasted 32 days, but only in the first week did substantial holding occur when undoubtedly many nonmembers held livestock. Milk was never included in the 1962 or 1964 "all-out holding actions." Only a few processors of either meat or milk have admitted signing master contracts although the NFO claims that several have signed master contracts. In 1967 such an effort to hold milk in several states was made. While this action caused a great deal of attention, no real progress was made, and the NFO has not attempted another major holding action.

After 1967 the NFO changed its marketing program to secure "equity" of price for farm products by pooling of farm products and receiving somewhat higher prices. This activity is termed their "Collection, Dispatch and Delivery System." Greater attention has been given to marketing of grain and swine than milk, although milk has recently been added to the commodities handled.

Since 1974 the NFO has attempted to enlarge its membership again and increase control of farm production. The goal is to control 30 percent of the production of a commodity and the program is termed "Operation 30%."

NFO has a family membership. However, only farmers can become members and only farmers earning the majority of their income from farming are allowed to hold elective office. County delegates have direct representation to the National Convention unlike the three other general farm organizations. This procedure may have led to greater floor fights at NFO conventions than have occurred in other farm organizations. Intermediate level organizational units at district and state levels have not been of great significance for the NFO until recent years when "multicounty collection points" have been set up. Regional marketing activities are coordinated closely between county chapters and the national leadership; however, the national leadership directs the major organizational work and marketing policies. States with NFO chapters have from one to three national directors elected at the annual national conventions. National directors serve as the key leaders in their states rather than state officers as is the case for the Farm Bureau, Farmers' Union and Grange where state officials are key organizational leaders.

The NFO places less emphasis upon lobbyist activities than the other three general farm organizations. The NFO considers the Federal Government's farm programs less than adequate in resolving the farmers' problems of securing equity in the marketplace. This is nearly the only opinion shared with the American Farm Bureau Federation. However, policy positions of the NFO have been quite similar to the Farmers' Union positions. In general, the NFO favors nearly all programs aimed at providing aid to farmers. The biggest difference with the Farmers' Union is that the NFO views these programs as being insufficient in scope and, thus, feel farmers should control the marketing of farm commodities.

While some observers have claimed the NFO has been composed mainly of small scale farm operators, several research studies (Morrison and Steeves,

1967) have shown NFO members to be above average-size farmers as are members of other farm organizations, especially the Farm Bureau. In addition, members of other farm organizations, such as the Farm Bureau, have been neither more likely nor less likely to join the NFO than have nonmembers (Leuthold, 1962, 1963, and 1968). This is probably not the case for leaders of other farm organizations who may feel there is too major a difference in the goals and objectives of the farm organizations for joint membership.

Early Farmer Movements and Organizations in U. S. History

1. Shays' Rebellion (1785-87) occurred in the years following the Revolutionary War. It centered in the New England states and was a protest against high farm debts, high taxes, and low farm prices. The Rebellion had violent episodes such as preventing judges from holding foreclosing proceedings and conducting farm market strikes. Farmers demanded that cattle and other farm items be considered legal tender to pay debts and taxes. Farmers preferred easy money or inflationary measures and, thus, were in direct conflict with the urban or financial community. The Rebellion was finally put down by the militia. Few problems were resolved by the Rebellion.

2. The Whiskey Rebellion (1791-94) covered a wide area of the new Western frontier although the main conflict occurred in Western Pennsylvania. The Rebellion stemmed from a tax levied on distilled spirits and stills by the Federal Government. Whiskey was the main source of cash income of farmers in the frontier region and, thus, they felt the tax was highly discriminatory. Tax officers were forcefully prevented from carrying out their duties. In 1794, President Washington sent in the militia to put down the Rebellion.

3. Jacksonian Revolt (1828) stemmed from the demands of settlers in frontier areas for free public lands, expansion of money, and cheap credit.

The revolt was an agrarian movement and not a specific event. Jackson, the agrarian hero, was elected by frontier votes against urban interests backing Adams. After the Second United States Bank Charter expired in 1836, state banks greatly increased; these new banks often loaned money at rates of 20 or 30 to one on deposit (wildcat banking). This practice led shortly thereafter to numerous bankruptcies of state banks and financial panics followed in 1837 and 1839. Money became scarce, indebtedness high, and land prices and farm prices very low. Western farmers (Midwest and border states) by this period of history had also gained excess capacity to produce products beyond purchasing power of the urban population. Although the Jacksonian Revolt was not one specific event, it describes the turmoil of a particular period of time. It indicates heightened but always present dislike of farmers against urban institutions and interests of this period of development.

4. The Southern Farmers' Alliance (formed in 1887-89) was an amalgamation of several farm organizations in Southern states. It combined The Texas Farmers' Alliance (1870), Greenbackers (1872), Arkansas Agricultural Wheel (1882), Louisiana Cooperative Union of America (1880), and North Carolina Farmers' Association. While each of these organizations had somewhat different purposes, all wanted a better means to represent farmers' interests. The Farmers' Alliance was described by one researcher as beginning as an antihorse thief association at one place, as a debating club at another, as a cemetery association at another, and as a group of farmers' clubs at still another. The Alliance became quite powerful and was the farmers' vehicle for an organized attack on economic and political problems of the day. It developed into the largest farmers' organization of the world of any period. Its membership, at its height, was three times greater than that attained by the Grange a decade earlier. In 1889 the Southern Alliance met with the National

Northern Farmers' Alliance (1880) and Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association in St. Louis in order to join forces. However, these latter groups never officially joined the Southern Alliance. The great St. Louis meeting did lead to a summary of many grievances and demands of the farmers in this period. With the Depression of the 1890's the alliances drifted into active politics, and the distinction between them and the Populist Party became small.

The Farmers' Alliance opposed activities of the railroads, banks, Wall Street, monopolies, and even the government. The Alliance was important because the farm population was at a peak. The westward movement of the population by this period had overshot its mark in some regions. Kansas, for example, experienced rapid out-migration. With membership of the Alliance so large it seemed natural that outstanding Alliance leaders became candidates for political office. By the mid-1890's the once powerful Alliance was separated from its own grassroots of local organizational support and declined rapidly thereafter. Little support for development of small businesses occurred after its height in 1890. These businesses became unpopular because many of the local alliances' businesses went under and some leaders lost thousands of dollars with liquidation. In most states the Alliance declined rapidly; however, the state organization in North Carolina continued in existence until 1940, but was of little consequence.

5. The American Society of Equity (1902) was organized in Indiana by J. A. Everitt. His aim was to develop a farm organization for "controlling production and prices of farm products." Many of Everitt's ideas were put into effect by the Federal Government in years following the existence of the organization. The Equity developed a plan for "monthly crop reporting" and "storing grains on the farm" during surplus periods. Wheat was the leading

item held from market for a "set price" although similar goals for tobacco in Kentucky and Tennessee were made. The organization, however, did not advocate government action. Everitt presented his ideas through the magazine, Up-to-Date Farming, of which he was owner and publisher. By 1906 the organization was represented in 12 Midwest states. There was a "commodity" section and an "organizational" section. In 1907, a split in the organization on regional lines occurred and Everitt was voted out of office as president. Membership continued to shift to more Western states and became essentially a "wheat belt" organization. Membership in 1912 was 40 thousand with the leading states being Wisconsin and Minnesota. The Equity was a leader in establishing marketing cooperatives of all types in the 1910's. Although attempts were made to transform the Equity into a political organization, the Equity never shifted its purpose. By 1917, the Equity had declined substantially. It formally amalgamated in 1934 with the Farmers' Union. However, the "Equity Cooperative Exchange" formed by the Equity was a leader in cooperative marketing.

6. The Kentucky-Tennessee Night Riders (1907-08) represented a small but violent type group of farmers. They burned tobacco warehouses and destroyed tobacco beds of farmers not cooperating in the "Tobacco Pool" formed by the American Society of Equity and the National Tobacco Growers' Association. Although the activities of the Night Riders were disclaimed and condemned by the Equity, the violent activities of the Night Riders were subsequently followed by a decline of the Equity in Kentucky and Tennessee. In 1905 Kentucky was the strongest Equity state in the country.

7. The Farmers' Holiday Association (1932-33) was formed by the powerful Iowa leader of the Farmers' Union, Milo Reno. The goal was to call a strike in which no food products could be marketed until farm prices were

raised. Three months after its beginning a membership of two million, in 24 states, was claimed by the organization. Wisconsin dairy farmers were very active in the Association and in one incident spilled over 30 thousand pounds of milk. Wisconsin and Iowa state troopers were called out to quell the rebellion. Attention turned briefly to other activities such as "penny auctions" at farm foreclosures. The violent protest to low farm prices was relatively short lived. However, its activities led to the creation of several government agencies to help the farmer.

References Cited or Reviewed

Berger, Samuel. Dollar Harvest: The Story of the Farm Bureau. Lexington, Massachusetts: Heath Lexington Press. 1971.

Brandsberg, George. The Two Sides in NFO's Battle. Ames: The Iowa State University Press. 1964.

Breimyer, Harold F. Individual Freedom and the Economic Organization of Agriculture. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 1965.

Buck, Solon J. The Agrarian Crusade: A Chronicle of the Farmer in Politics. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press. 1920.

Buck, Solon J. The Granger Movement: A Study of Agricultural Organization and Its Political, Economic, and Social Manifestations, 1870-1880. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 1913. (Reissued, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 1963.)

Campbell, Christiana M. The Farm Bureau and the New Deal. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 1962.

Crampton, John A. The National Farmers Union: Ideology of a Pressure Group. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 1965.

Farm Bureau News. American Farm Bureau Federation, Washington, D. C.

Gardner, Charles M. The Grange: Friend of the Farmer. Washington, D. C.: National Grange. 1949.

Hundley, James. "A Test of Theories in Collective Behavior: The National Farmers' Organization," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University. December, 1965.

Kile, O. M. The Farm Bureau Through Three Decades. Baltimore, Maryland: The Waverly Press. 1948.

Leuthold, Frank O. "Farmer Organizations in the United States: Their Development, Policies, and Common Factors." Knoxville: Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, University of Tennessee. January, 1967 (mimeographed).

Leuthold, Frank O. "The Status of the N.F.O. in Wisconsin, 1962." Madison: Department of Rural Sociology, University of Wisconsin. 1962 (mimeographed).

Leuthold, Frank O., and James R. Hundley. "An Analysis of the Development of a Farmers' Movement: The National Farmers' Organization (NFO)," paper presented at the Rural Sociological Society Meetings, San Fernando State College, Northridge, California. 1963 (mimeographed).

Leuthold, Frank. "Farm Organization Membership Among Commercial Farmers Located in Four South Central Tennessee Counties." Knoxville: Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, University of Tennessee. 1968 (mimeographed).

Lindstrom, David E. American Farmers and Rural Organizations. Champaign, Illinois: The Farrard Press. 1948.

Martin, Edward W. (McCabe, James D.). History of the Grange Movement or the Farmer's War Against Monopolies. Philadelphia: National Publishing Company. 1873. (Reprinted 1969, New York: Augustus M. Kelley.)

McConnell, Grant. The Decline of Agrarian Democracy. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1953.

McCrorie, James N. In Union Is Strength. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Centre for Community Studies. 1964.

McCune, Wesley. The Farm Bloc. Garden City, New York: Doran and Company, Inc. 1943.

Monsen, Joseph R., Jr., and Mark W. Cannon. The Makers of Public Policy: American Power Groups and Their Ideologies. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 96-132. 1965.

Morrison, Denton E. "The General Farm Organizations," in D. Hathaway et al., Michigan Farmers in the Mid-Sixties: A Survey of Their Views of Marketing Problems and Organizations. East Lansing: Michigan State University, Agricultural Experiment Station, Report 54. August, 1966.

Morrison, Denton (ed.). Farmers' Organizations and Movements: Research Needs and a Bibliography of the United States and Canada. East Lansing: Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 24. 1970.

Morrison, Denton E., and Allan Steeves. "Deprivation, Discontent, and Social Movement Participation: Evidence on a Contemporary Farmers' Movement, the NFO," Rural Sociology, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 414-434. December, 1967.

NFO Reporter. National Farmers Organization, Corning, Iowa.

Parsons, Talcott. "An Outline of the Social System," pp. 30-79 in Talcott Parsons and others (ed.), The Theories of Society. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe. 1961.

Robinson, W. L. The Grange 1867-1967: First Century of Service and Evolution. Washington, D. C.: The National Grange. 1966.

Rohrer, Wayne. "Agrarianism and the Social Organization of U. S. Agriculture: The Concomitance of Stability and Change," Rural Sociology, Vol. 30, pp. 5-14. March, 1970.

Saloutos, Theodore P. Farmer Movements in the South--1865-1933. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1960. (Reissued, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964.)

Saloutos, Theodore P., and John D. Hicks. Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 1900-1939. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 1951. (Reissued as Twentieth Century Populism. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 1964.)

Shannon, Fred A. American Farmers' Movements. Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand. 1957.

Shover, John L. Cornbelt Rebellion: The Farmers' Holiday Association. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press. 1965.

Talbot, Ross B. "The Changing Political Position of Agriculture," Journal of Farm Economics, Vol. 45, No. 2, pp. 318-330. May, 1963.

Taylor, Carl C. The Farmers' Movement, 1620-1920. New York: American Book Company, 1953.

Tontz, Robert L. "Membership of General Farmers' Organizations, United States, 1874-1960," Agricultural History, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 143-156. July, 1964.

Tweaten, Luther. Foundations of Farm Policy. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 1970.

Wing, DeWitt C. "Trends in National Farm Organizations," in Farmers in a Changing World, the 1940 Yearbook of Agriculture. Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office. 1940.